

The Heavens 1001

Chapter 1001: The Ji Clans Last Secret Weapon!

The various sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea were in an uproar. The Dao Realm Patriarchs had bright gleams in their eyes, and their expressions were extremely serious as they looked over at Planet East Victory, and the middle-aged man emerging from the Medicine Immortal Sect.

“Fang Yanxu!”

“It’s Fang Yanxu! He forsook the Fang Clan and started his own school of thought! He established the Medicine Immortal Sect....”

“So, he’s actually reached the Dao Realm. I remember that back in the day he was an Ancient Realm cultivator....”

“So, this is the Fang Clan, huh? Their hidden resources are so profound! The Medicine Immortal Sect is something that everyone knew about, and yet their allegiance went as unnoticed as a shadow in the lamplight!!”

Up in the starry sky, a slight smile could be seen on Fang Shoudao’s face, and there was a profound gleam of meaning in his eyes. Ji Xiufang, who was still locked in combat with him, suddenly felt her eyes go wide.

“Fang Yanxu.... So HE’s your trump card! I can’t believe you were able to hold off on allowing a Dao Realm expert like that to make an appearance.... More than half of the members of your clan have died, and you even waited for us to unleash our secret weapon before making your move!” But then, Ji Xiufang looked at Fang Shoudao and smiled.

“Unfortunately for you,” she said, “when the Ji Clan makes a move, we don’t lose! This is your final trump card, right?” She smiled, a smile as cold as ice. Then, just as suddenly, she felt her heart sinking. That was because Fang Shoudao actually... was not just calm. No, he was looking into her eyes with a profound look.

The sight of it once again filled Ji Xiufang with alarm.

“You’re bluffing!” she declared. A thousand thoughts ran through her head, but she couldn’t think of any area where something had been overlooked in their plan. She was certain that the Fang Clan did not have any more trump cards, and therefore, she smiled coldly at Fang Shoudao, and began to fight once again.

Booms echoed out in the starry sky, and down on Planet East Victory, the members of the Fang Clan were extremely excited. Meng Hao looked over at the middle-aged man approaching from off in the distance, and could clearly sense the Dao Realm Essence fluctuations.

The faces of the three old men from the Ji Clan instantly fell. Although their longevity was rapidly withering away, they still had decades of life left to live. Now that they were up against a Dao Realm expert, someone who was qualified to kill them in an instant, roaring filled their minds, and they instantly fell into retreat.

In that moment, however, Fang Yanxu of the Medicine Immortal Sect laughed and closed in. He waved his right hand, and an enormous power surged toward the retreating men.

Booms shook everything as Essence power exploded out. The three men let out shrill cries, and blood sprayed from their mouths as they retreated at top speed. As for all of the other traitorous clan members in the ancestral mansion, they began trembling, and likewise fell into frenzied retreat.

All of this seemed to be a complete reversal of the previous events. From the look of things, the rebellion was about to conclude!

However, for some reason, Meng Hao felt his heartbeat increasing. It was as if... something was about to occur that would cause a monumental change in all of the upheaval in the clan .

This feeling came completely unexpectedly, and only continued to grow more intense.

Up in midair, the three Quasi-Dao experts bellowed in rage. Realizing that flight was not an option, their madness overwhelmed them and they turned and shot toward Fang Yanxu. Rumbling echoed out, and the air was shattered. Wild winds screamed, and cracks appeared in the surface of the ground.

The attacks launched by the terracotta soldier and Pill Elder added hail to snow. Blood sprayed from the mouths of the three men, and they howled miserably. One of them lost his right arm, which exploded and vanished into a haze of blood.

They lashed out with extreme power, but it was all contained and blocked. Their faces filled with despair as the shadow of death spread out to cover their hearts.

Down on the ground, the traitorous clan members were being chased down and killed. More blood spread out, and countless people died. Even those who chose to flee ended up finding no place to flee to.

Elders fought viciously. Immortal Realm clan members battled. Spirit Realm clan members went equally wild.

Everything seemed to be turning around for the loyal clan members, and yet Meng Hao's nervous sensation continued to grow more intense. It was as if... some eruption was about to occur.

As the Patriarchs of the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea watched the battle, their feelings, although not as intense as Meng Hao's, did cause them to hesitate.

“The resources of the Fang Clan are extremely profound.... They definitely deserve to be one of the Four Great Clans. However, when the Ji Clan attacks, could it really be resolved so simply?”

“The Fang Clan has unleashed all of their secret weapons. Does the Ji Clan... have anything left in reserve?”

“Could it be that the three Dao Realm experts outside the sealing shield will join in the battle?”

“Not likely. The Three Great Daoist Societies... have already quelled the uprisings in their respective organizations. If those three dared to enter the fight, the Three Great Daoist Societies would definitely seize the opportunity to make a move!”

“So... what trick does the Ji Clan have up its sleeve?” The Dao Realm Patriarchs all watched closely.

“Something's off!” As Meng Hao looked around, he realized that apparently, nobody else had the same feeling as him. He seemed to be the only one in the entire clan who thought something fishy was going on.

Up in midair, booms rang out from the battles going on. Fang Yanxu was in a position of complete superiority, and when he attacked, massive explosions resulted. The three Quasi-Dao old men were already injured, and could just barely fight back. Blood spurted out from their wounds constantly, and they were clearly on the verge of being eradicated in spirit and body.

Down below, the traitorous clan members were suffering successive defeats. They were suffering gruesome and severe casualties, and it appeared to be impossible for them to ever again seize the upper hand.

Despite that, the sense of imminent disaster continued to grow stronger in Meng Hao.

He wasn't sure why, but subconsciously, he found himself looking around at the members of the Fang Clan in the ancestral mansion. His gaze swept about, and just when he was about to give up, his eyes suddenly went wide, and fixed upon a single person.

That was... Fang Donghan!

Back on Planet South Heaven, he had helped Meng Hao escape from an ambush. After Meng Hao returned to the Fang Clan, he had not acted with any sort of hostility. Apparently, his main goal was to incite Meng Hao and Fang Wei into fighting each other. After they were both injured, then he would be able to rise to prominence.

That was what Meng Hao had always assumed. Now, as he looked over at Fang Donghan, his heart began to pound. That was because Fang Donghan's lips were suddenly twisted into a smile of derision. Apparently, he was not among the traitors, yet no fighting had occurred in his vicinity. He stood there, apparently able to remain concealed from the views of all others, completely overlooked by everyone around him.

Perhaps you could even say that he had been forgotten!

It was impossible to say what method he had used to make all of the other clan members forget his existence....

He was visible, but anyone that looked at him couldn't remember who he was; it was a strange sensation indeed.

When Meng Hao looked at him, he could apparently sense it, and looked back. Their gazes locked on to each other, and Meng Hao's mind filled with roaring. His face flickered as an unprecedented sensation of crisis exploded out within him.

Even as that happened, Meng Hao's vision swam, and he suddenly felt as if he were entering another world. It was a world where everything was as crimson as blood. The ground was like a mass of gore, and roaring sounds filled the air. All of a sudden, countless iron chains snaked up from the ground. They were red, as if they had been stained by unimaginable amounts of blood, and they flew out in Meng Hao's direction, instantly wrapping around him to bind him up.

He was absolutely powerless to resist, almost as if he had turned into a mortal. Even more terrifying to Meng Hao was the fact that he was incredibly sleepy, as if he couldn't even keep his eyelids open.

No matter how alarmed he became, he was incapable of controlling his own body, and was clearly on the verge of falling fast asleep.

As the chains closed in on him, all of a sudden, the first generation Patriarch's Nirvana Fruit suddenly began to vibrate inside of his bag of holding.

A tremor ran through him, and then he began to quiver all over. He suddenly woke up, and his eyes widened. The vision he had been experiencing shattered into fragments, which then turned into a windstorm that swept about in all directions. It was as if some massive power had reached out, grabbed ahold of him, and wrenched him forcibly out of that world.

Blood sprayed from his mouth as his vision returned to normal. He was still on Planet East Victory, in the Fang Clan. He could see Fang Donghan smiling at him, a cold, deviant smile. The sensation Meng Hao got was that of unspeakable fear and terror. It was as if there was something hiding inside of Fang Donghan... some sort of towering Immortal Divinity that could crush even the Dao Realm!

Fang Donghan looked deeply at Meng Hao, as if he were somewhat surprised that Meng Hao had been able to extricate himself from that strange world.

"He's not Fang Donghan!!" Rumbling filled Meng Hao's mind. A single glance had thrown him into a terrifying, blood-colored world, and Meng Hao got the feeling that if he didn't possess that Nirvana Fruit, then... he would certainly have perished!!

Even after having been pulled out, he still coughed up blood, and his chest ached, almost as if his heart had been tugged at by invisible hands. His face was ashen as he backed up, and without the slightest hesitation, he called out to the terracotta soldier with divine will.

Get back here!!

The terracotta soldier was currently fighting alongside Fang Yanxu against the three Quasi-Dao experts. However, it didn't hesitate for even a moment. As soon as it sensed the divine will, it stopped attacking and shot back toward Meng Hao.

Even as the terracotta soldier started moving, Fang Donghan tilted his head, an icy smile plastered on his face. Then, he extended his right hand and gently waved it through the air.

That movement caused Fang Danyun's expression to fall. Rumbling sounds filled him, and blood sprayed from his mouth. He tried to retreat, but before he could move very far, blood spurted out all over his body. Cracking sounds could be heard as numerous rips and tears opened up. It happened ten times in a row, and in the blink of an eye, he was drastically weakened, and even began to emanate a boundless Death aura.

From the look of it, even a Quasi-Dao Paragon... could be severely wounded by a single handwave of Fang Donghan!

At the same time, Fang Yanxu let out a powerful roar as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Essence power exploded out, the Essence of plants and vegetation. Countless plants appeared in his vicinity, but they immediately withered up. Fang Yanxu coughed up a mouthful of blood as he tumbled backward. Apparently, even his cultivation base... was forced back by the attack!

The wave of a hand seriously injured Pill Elder and forced Fang Yanxu back. This turn of events was too sudden, and if the terracotta soldier had not been moving toward Meng Hao, it would have fallen apart.

"You...." said Fang Yanxu, his eyes wide with disbelief and astonishment. He looked down into the crowd from up in midair, at the person who everyone had overlooked and forgotten... Fang Donghan!

“The Ji Clan is more useless than I thought...” Fang Donghan said softly. He stepped up into the air, rising up, his hair floating around him. His appearance gradually changed, and as everyone watched, he became someone else, not Fang Donghan, but rather, a middle-aged man.

“Were it not for me awakening just in the nick of time, I’m afraid all of the Ji Clan’s preparations would have been in vain.” Fang Donghan shook his head as he hovered there in midair, his body emanating boundless cultivation base ripples. He looked like... a Paragon of Heaven and Earth. The sensation of bloodline ripples emanated out from him, making it clear that he was a member of the Fang Clan, filling all hearts with rumbling.

“Is there anyone left in the Fang Clan who recognizes me?” Fang Donghan said, his voice soft but boundlessly ancient.

Chapter 1002: Who Are You!?

Because of the bloodline aura that emanated off of him, everyone in the Fang Clan, including Meng Hao, could sense that... he was definitely not from the Ji Clan. He was definitely a member of the Fang Clan. Furthermore, the bloodline sense they felt indicated that he was older than almost all of the other clan members. He was incredibly ancient.

Meng Hao was shaken inwardly. This was the same type of feeling he had gotten from the corpse of the first generation Patriarch in the necropolis!

The entire ancestral mansion was completely quiet, and all clan members stared in shock.

Out in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, the Dao Realm Patriarchs of the various sects and clans were shaken. Their eyes opened wide, and expressions of shock could be seen on their faces. The feeling they got when looking at Fang Donghan was... one of complete terror and fright!

“Who...?” The Dao Realm Patriarchs all felt their faces flickering, and they began to pant. Actually, none of them had the slightest impression of Fang Donghan.

“Who are you?!” Fang Yanxu’s face was pale, and he coughed up another mouthful of blood. His body was almost entirely black, as if some sort of curse power was spreading inside of him.

“Who am I?” asked Fang Donghan. Somehow, his expression exuded incredible archaicness.

“I’m Fang Daozi. I am... the eldest son of the first generation Patriarch. Have all you younglings of the Fang Clan forgotten about me?”

The voice was like thunder striking against all of the Heavens.

His single statement shook all of the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. All who heard him, all of the cultivators who were watching, felt their minds battered by waves of shock.

“He’s... he’s... the eldest son of the Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch?”

“That’s not possible! The Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch was of the same era as Lord Ji. He died a long time ago, and his son couldn’t possibly have lived for so long!”

“Fang Daozi.... Fang Daozi.... Now that I think about it, I’m pretty sure I’ve read about that name in the ancient records of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.”

The cultivators were in an uproar. As for the Dao Realm Patriarchs, they looked on in wide-eyed shock. However, it didn’t take long for them to place the name.

“Fang Daozi!! I remember that in the earliest generation, there was someone by that name... who was personally killed by the first generation Patriarch. The reason was never made clear!”

“That person existed in an age far, far removed from our own? Is he really still alive?”

“What level has his cultivation base reached?”

Everyone outside the clan was shocked. Strangely, however, the members of the Fang Clan stared blankly. None of them had ever even heard of this eldest son of the first generation Patriarch.

It was almost as if there were no record of him in any of the clan’s histories at all. And yet, because of the bloodline sensation they got from him, they were certain about one thing. This Fang Daozi was absolutely, positively a member of the Fang Clan.

Furthermore, he had an ancient bloodline that was completely terrifying!

The Three Great Daoist Societies were shocked by this turn of events. They could never have imagined that a powerful expert like this would be hiding in the Fang Clan. Furthermore, his identity was shocking to the extreme. On top of all of that, he was colluding with the Ji Clan.

As Fang Daozi made his appearance on Planet East Victory, the Fang Clan's Dao bell began to materialize in midair over the ancestral mansion. Then, it started to emit boundless light, and to toll.

That was... the tolling that could be heard when a clan member appeared with a very strong bloodline. After their identity was recorded in the bell, the resonance that formed caused the bell's tolling to ring out.

The sound shocked all of the members of the Fang Clan to the core, and confirmed that Fang Daozi... was definitely a member of the Fang Clan.

"What an annoying sound," said Fang Daozi, sighing. "It reminds me of that damned old man. Shut UP!" His eyes flickered with an intense light, and as he spoke, the Dao bell suddenly stopped tolling. It went completely silent.

Meng Hao stood there in the crowd, panting. He looked up at Fang Daozi up in midair, and his heart trembled. There was really no possible way he could ever have imagined that there would be such drastic upheavals and momentous events within the Fang Clan.

Obviously... these upheavals were closely connected to Fang Daozi.

The fighting between the clan members in the ancestral mansion had come to a halt. Everyone was completely shocked as they looked up into the air. Even the traitorous clan members weren't really sure what was happening.

Pill Elder's face was pale white, and he fell back. Fang Yanxu wiped the blood from his face and glared down at Fang Daozi.

The three Quasi-Dao experts sighed in relief. After glancing fearfully at Fang Daozi, their eyes once again filled with the mad desire for destruction, and they glanced coldly at the hosts of cultivators in the Fang Clan.

"There really isn't anyone who remembers me?" Fang Daozi said with a sigh, his voice incredibly ancient. He then waved his hand and pointed up into the air.

His finger caused the sky to shatter. A huge boom echoed out as a massive vortex appeared. It began to spin, causing rumbling sounds to echo out as something became visible in the vortex.

Shockingly, everyone could see Ji Xiufang and Fang Shoudao fighting each other.

Ji Xiufang then started to laugh. She quickly moved, stepping into the vortex and then appearing in midair above Planet East Victory.

“Xiufang offers greetings, Senior,” she said with a sweet smile, bowing to Fang Daozi.

Fang Shoudao’s face went very dark, and he pursued her into the vortex. After emerging from it, he turned to look at Fang Daozi, his eyes icy.

“Fang Shoudao,” Ji Xiufang said, smiling, “instead of looking at this as the Ji Clan attacking the Fang Clan, it would be better to say... that the Ji Clan is just paying back a favor to a Senior member of the Fang Clan.”

Fang Shoudao didn’t respond. He clasped hands and bowed to Fang Daozi.

“Shoudao offers greetings, Patriarch Daozi.”

Fang Daozi looked over at Fang Shoudao and smiled.

“You’re a descendant from Old Third’s bloodline, right?” he said coolly. “You know, I’m very disappointed by the Fang Clan. After all these years, you only have two Dao Realm experts.... Well, since that’s the case, I’m just going to have to disband the current Fang Clan, starting today!

“A new Fang Clan will begin on Planet East Victory, and I will lead it on a different path.” With that, he waved his right hand, causing miserable screams to rise up from the members of the Fang Clan. Only the traitorous members were unaffected. Everyone else felt their blood begin to boil, as if it were literally burning.

It was the same with Meng Hao. His blood began to boil, as if it wanted to explode out of him. Fang Danyun, Fang Yanxu and even Fang Shoudao all experienced the same thing.

Because of Fang Daozi, the entire clan instantly changed.

Meng Hao trembled, but endured the pain, his eyes shining with a strange light.

“Father definitely knew all of this was going to happen. He sent me here to Planet East Victory. Therefore... there must not be any real danger. The Fang Clan... must still have one more move left.”

Fang Shoudao was trembling. Considering the level of his cultivation base, he was incapable of stopping his blood from burning. From the feeling he got, Fang Daozi was in the Dao Realm, just like him. However, there was something completely unfathomable about him.

Fang Shoudao knew that in the Dao Realm, every additional Essence caused your cultivation base to experience drastic changes. A difference of one level was enormous, and yet, despite all this, Fang Shoudao’s expression didn’t reveal the slightest bit of alarm or shock. All he did was close his eyes.

That reaction caused Ji Xiufang to stare in shock. The alarm she felt in her heart continued to grow.

“For him to be so calm indicates that the Fang Clan hasn’t played all of their trump cards. Why is he so calm even when poised on the brink of destruction!?”

Even as shock filled Ji Xiufang’s heart, Fang Daozi caught sight of Fang Shoudao’s calmness, and his heart thumped. Gradually, an idea was forming within his mind that even he didn’t dare to think was possible.

As soon as the idea flared up, he pushed it down. He was just about to wave his hand, when his body began to tremble. His face then flickered rapidly, and his eyes flashed as they sought out Meng Hao from within the crowds.

When he looked over, Meng Hao’s mind trembled. However, he clenched his jaw and looked back at Fang Daozi. Next to him, the terracotta soldier’s eyes flickered, and it moved to stand in front of Meng Hao, exploding out with power to help protect Meng Hao. It raised its greatsword, seemingly ready to pay any price, even be crushed into dust, to keep Meng Hao safe.

It was at this point that Fang Daozi's face fell. "No. He's not here... he's..."

All of a sudden, he turned to look toward the rift from which the terracotta soldier had emerged.

He was looking... through the rift into the Ancestral Land!

"Impossible!!" Fang Daozi's eyes widened as if he was looking at something completely and utterly unbelievable. He began to pant, his casual attitude disappeared, and his ancientness suddenly seemed to vanish. Without even thinking about it, he stepped backward a few paces, his eyes turning crimson.

"Impossible!! This is completely impossible!!" He seemed to be going mad. He roared and extended his right hand, pointing toward the rift. It was at this point that, all of a sudden, three streams of Essence qi shot out from Fang Daozi, causing everything to shake. Planet East Victory trembled so violently it seemed as though it might collapse.

One of those streams was just like Fang Yanxu's Essence of plants and vegetation. It was an Essence of boundless life force, and as soon as it appeared, the sky dimmed and a huge wind kicked up.

The origin and source of all things is Essence!!

A thorough understanding of Essence, mastery and control of the control of Essence, that is the Dao Realm!

In addition to the Essence of plants and vegetation, there was a stream of flickering lightning that emitted rumbling sounds. That was... the Essence of lightning, an indestructible lightning that could eternally destroy everything in Heaven and Earth. When it appeared, the lightning bolt seemed to replace all the light in the world.

The third of Fang Daozi's Essence streams was, shockingly... an incredibly strong aura of Death. It was the will of the underworld and the Yellow Springs, a magic of reincarnation!

It was the Essence of reincarnation!

These terrifying Dao Realm Essences shot toward the rift, as if to completely destroy it.

However, even as the three streams of Essence neared the rift, a hand slowly stretched out from within. It waved a finger, and all of the Essences vanished. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust....

The hand was incredibly withered, as if it didn't contain an ounce of blood within it. It looked like an old, dead tree, and yet, power appeared within that finger. It was a power that could shock Heaven and Earth, and shook the minds of the Dao Realm experts of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Furthermore, unprecedented ripples spread out from the Ninth Mountain in that instant. It was as if there was someone in the Ji Clan who slept eternally... but had been awoken by the sudden appearance of that hand.

Fang Daozi's body trembled, and his face went ashen. A wild look of disbelief appeared in his eyes.

“The Withered Tree Blossoms in Spring Incantation

Impossible. He's dead! I saw it happen with my own eyes! I felt him die! His Essence vanished, and his soul doesn't exist anywhere in Heaven and Earth. He was never reborn into the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“I'm absolutely certain, that... he really did die that year! He couldn't possibly be alive! Who are you? WHO ARE YOU!?!?” Fang Daozi's heart was pounding, and he was filled with indescribable fear as he yelled, raving madly.

Chapter 1003: First Generation Patriarch!

There had been many twists and turns during these upheavals in the Fang Clan. Fang Daozi had awakened; however, even that was not as astounding to the Ninth Mountain and Sea as this current scene.

The Dao Realm Patriarchs of all the sects and clans looked on with pale faces and trembling minds. When the hand stretched out of the vortex from the Fang Clan's ancestral Land, their minds went completely blank.

The first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan was a person from the history of the Ninth Mountain and Sea that could never be forgotten

Long ago, when chaos reigned, he followed the mysterious Lord Li on a long campaign to vanquish all the powers of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. He started out as nothing, yet rose to a level of prominence that placed him higher than all the Heavens. He carried out a slaughter which caused all to dread him. His mad valiance stained every corner of the starry sky as red as blood!

It was during that time that they also came to know Lord Ji. They were three stunning, outstanding figures in history, Paragons of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, people who became the nightmares of an era.

They eventually gathered a following of three Archdemons, as well as numerous other powerful experts who joined them for the purpose of unifying the Ninth Mountain and Sea. In the end, there were nine great Doyens.

When the chaos of the Ninth Mountain and Sea was finally brought to an end, the Demon Immortal Sect was founded. It was the most powerful sect in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, a force that all other powers and sects had no choice but to pay obeisance to.

During feasts and other occasions, people would often say that without the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan, perhaps... Lord Li's war for the Heavens would have been much more difficult. That was because there were numerous occasions on which the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan risked his own life to save Lord Li.

Because of all of that, the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan rocked the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea. Even though he had passed away in meditation long ago, the one withered hand that appeared now filled the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea with shock.

The Three Great Daoist Societies were astonished, and a huge commotion rose from the Ji Clan on the Ninth Mountain.

In fact, the will of the eternally slumbering first generation Patriarch of the Ji Clan, who had become undying by fusing with the Heavens, suddenly awoke and... looked in the direction of his old friend.

In the moment that he awoke, all of the natural laws in the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea grew calm.

It was as if, in that moment, there was nothing left in the whole Ninth Mountain and Sea other than the hand that had emerged from that rift. As the Essence power dispersed, a figure appeared, clad in a long green robe. He stepped slowly out of the vortex to become the center of all attention.

All members of the Fang Clan who saw him felt their minds rumbling, as if they were being struck by a hundred thousand lightning bolts. This person was very familiar to them. How could they not know who he was? There wasn't a single clan member who hadn't seen his picture in the past, and bowed in worship to it.

It was... the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan!!

Meng Hao felt as if his scalp was about explode. The shock felt by everyone else was nothing compared to how he felt. That was because Meng Hao instantly realized that this man... was the same corpse he had seen sitting cross-legged in the necropolis!

"He's... he's actually alive!" thought Meng Hao, panting. Then he thought back to how he had practiced cultivation in the necropolis, presumably under this man's observation, and he suddenly felt cold sweat dripping down his back.

As soon as the man stepped out of the vortex, Fang Shoudao's eyes went wide with excitement and reverence.

"Greetings, first generation Patriarch!" he said, immediately dropping to his knees to kowtow.

Fang Yanxu's expression was calm. His injuries from moments ago were still there, but the alarm on his face before had been an act. Now, a look of pious zealotry could be seen as he dropped down to offer worship.

Fang Danyun similarly dropped to his knees.

All members of the Fang Clan dropped to their knees, their hearts trembling. As for the traitorous clan members, they stood there for a moment, quivering. Then one of them, it was hard to say who, dropped down to kowtow, and they all followed suit.

Suddenly, the earth began to crumble, and a huge hole appeared, which stretched all the way down to reveal the Seventh Patriarch, and all of the other Patriarchs with him, all of whom ceased fighting and dropped down in worship.

Meng Hao's eyes were wide as he followed along with everyone else to offer formal greetings to the first generation Patriarch.

His mind was spinning as he suddenly thought about the things his father had told him before he had left for Planet East Victory. He had seemed very certain that Meng Hao would not be in any danger on Planet East Victory.

"The Nirvana Fruits were just bait to get me to come here..." he thought in a sudden moment of realization.

Ji Xiufang stared, dazed, and her entire body trembled violently as the green-robed man walked out of the vortex. She began to pant, and her mind was reeling. She had also seen depictions of the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan, and had heard many of the terrifying legends about him.

He was a person who... had struck even Lord Ji with terror back in the days when the two of them were contending for control of the Heavens!

It took Ji Xiufang only a split second to understand everything.

"So this is Fang Shoudao's trump card," she thought. "He knew all along that the first generation Patriarch was still alive. The whole time, their goal... had nothing to do with the Ji Clan. It was all for... Fang Daozi!!"

When she saw the first generation Patriarch walking out, her face drained of blood. She suddenly realized that from the very, very beginning, she herself had been nothing more than a clown. She had been completely confident that victory was already in her grasp, that all contingencies had been planned for with nothing overlooked. However... she had completely miscalculated the most important thing!

The first generation Patriarch was actually still alive!

"How could this be...? The Fang Clan's first generation Patriarch died! Even the Essence of the Ninth Mountain and Sea confirmed it! There is no way that he could still be alive! The Essence of the Ninth Mountain and Sea belongs to Patriarch Ji! How could he possibly have made a mistake!?!?" As Ji Xiufang felt shock rolling through her, Fang Daozi gazed at the figure walking out of the rift, and mentally collapsed.

“Impossible.... This is simply impossible....” Fang Daozi was shaking hard. The person he had most feared in his entire life was none other than his father, the first generation Patriarch.

That terror was so great that, in the years during which Lord Ji fought for control of the Heavens, he had chosen to Sever his own fear. That fear was his inner Devil, and without severing it, he would have found it very difficult to advance his cultivation base ever again.

That inner Devil was actually a fetter that he had shackled himself with. During the war, he had sided with the Ji Clan, and when it came time for the Ji Clan and the Fang Clan to fight each other, he was the first person in the history of the Fang Clan... to ever betray his clan.

He would never forget the look of disappointment in his father’s eyes, that expression of sadness and guilt that covered his face. When Fang Daozi saw that, he was incredibly happy, and even started to laugh out loud.

You founded the Fang Clan? Well I’m going to destroy it! That’s because I’m going to make a new Fang Clan, MY Fang Clan!

Those were the words Fang Daozi had spoken when his father had suppressed him. He had even laughed.

The Fang Clan lost that war. The Ji Clan won, gaining control of the Heavens, and securing Lordship of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. The reason for their victory wasn’t solely because of the traitor Fang Daozi, but his betrayal had played a significant role.

As for Fang Daozi, he was eventually put down by the first generation Patriarch. Despite his grave crimes, the Patriarch couldn’t bear to kill him. He destroyed his body, letting his soul remain behind to be reborn as a new member of the Fang Clan.

By the time the first generation Patriarch passed away into meditation, Fang Daozi had been reborn numerous times into the Fang Clan. Were it not for Ji Tian’s use of Karma magic after the passing away of the first generation Patriarch, then perhaps Fang Daozi would have remained in that cycle of rebirth for all time. Life after life, never remembering who he was.

However, because of the magic of Karma, he awoke.

Then, he remembered everything that had happened, and that wild desire for the destruction of the clan burned in him once again.

He remained deeply hidden, restoring his cultivation base, not letting even a single hint out about his true identity. Eventually, he died and was reborn again. From then on, though, he awoke every time he experienced rebirth. Each time, he would continue to practice his cultivation, and gradually grew stronger and stronger.

However, he never dared to make a move. Although he had heard his father died, he wasn't absolutely, positively certain he was dead. He also wasn't sure whether his father had left behind any precautions before dying. However, he was patient. He waited and watched, never making a move, waiting until he was sure that he would succeed.

However, when Fang Heshan crushed that jade slip, the plan went into motion early. Fang Daozi's hand was forced. Of course, even if the plan been carried out at some later time, the Fang Clan would still have been thrown into complete chaos because of the preparations made by the Ji Clan.

Their willingness to put the plan into action was due to the matter of the legacy of Lord Li, a legacy that even Lord Ji had not been able to acquire. The Ji Clan had suddenly calculated that destiny related to that legacy was on Planet East Victory.

Fang Daozi had waited until he was sure the Fang Clan had shown its entire hand, and was on its last legs. He was made even more confident... when Meng Hao absorbed the first generation Patriarch's Nirvana Fruit. Because of the bloodline sensation that Fang Daozi experienced, he was finally fully convinced that his father really was dead!

Therefore, he finally chose to reveal himself, and step into the light.

He had never imagined that after all of his analyses, after all of his preparations, in the moment when he was just about to succeed, all of a sudden he would find out that his father... wasn't actually dead!

"This is impossible! If you weren't really dead, why didn't you kill me earlier...?" cried Fang Daozi, trembling.

The person to answer was not the first generation Patriarch, but rather, Fang Shoudao.

“We were aware of the identities of all of the traitorous members of the Fang Clan,” he said softly, “except for you. We could have killed them at any time. However, that wouldn’t have done any good. As long as you remained alive, wiping them out would only be postponing the calamity.

“As for you, we really couldn’t figure out who you were.... Only Ji Tian could possibly pick up clues regarding the first generation Patriarch’s magical technique. Even I couldn’t determine who you had been reborn as.

“Only your death can ensure that the roots of the Fang Clan’s catastrophe would be severed.

“Therefore, we set up this elaborate scheme, the purpose of which... was to lure you out!” As he spoke, his eyes shifted over to Meng Hao.

Meng Hao’s face flickered. His heart was filled with complicated emotions as he looked at the rivers of blood staining the grounds of the ancestral mansion.

When the Second Patriarch, Fourth Patriarch and Sixth Patriarch heard Fang Shoudao’s words, their faces went pale white.

“Well, who cares if you’re still alive!?” growled Fang Daozi. “I might not have succeeded this time, but at least... I get to take a lot of members of the Fang Clan to the grave with me! That’s good enough!” Fang Daozi threw his head back and laughed, his expression vicious. The instant he saw his father walk out, he knew... that he was defeated.

However, what he said was true. More than half of the entire clan had been killed. Rivers of blood and mounds of corpses could be seen everywhere.

Fang Shoudao didn’t reply. He looked at Fang Daozi, his expression complex. As the Fang Clan’s Earth Patriarch, he was aware of Fang Daozi’s whole story. He also knew that Fang Daozi wasn’t aware of the whole truth of the matter, which caused him to sigh.

“Senior Daozi,” he said quietly, “this planet... is not the same Planet East Victory it used to be.”

In response, Fang Daozi gaped, and his face fell. It was as if he had suddenly remembered something which caused his jaw to drop in shock.

It was in that moment that Fang Shoudao turned to the first generation Patriarch and bowed deeply.

The green-robed first generation Patriarch, who hadn't said a single word so far, extended his hand towards the lands around him.

Withered Tree... Blossoms in Spring!

Chapter 1004: The Fang Clan!

“Withered Tree, Blossoms in Spring” contained two meanings. One meaning was that in the conclusion of all things that was death, there would often appear a bit of life. It was just like reincarnation, which connected life and death. It was a cycle, an endless, never-ending cycle.

Another meaning of the expression... was not that of reincarnation.

It was a meaning that pertained to a type of cycle, but not the blooming of spring; yet, it was equally about life.

Meng Hao looked on in astonishment as the first generation Patriarch waved his hand. Then, he watched wide-eyed as one of the most shocking things he had ever before witnessed played out in front of his very eyes.

What he saw was time suddenly come to a stop both inside and outside the ancestral mansion. Then, everything began to move backward!

Breath by breath, moment by moment, everything began to go in reverse. Blood that had sprayed out was returned to the body. Severed heads returned to the necks that they had left. Everyone who had toppled over in death, once again stood in place. People running forward began to speed backward. Adversaries locked in deadly fighting split apart.

Meng Hao panted as this happened to everyone in the entire Fang Clan, with the exception of himself and five other people. None of those five people seemed very surprised by what was happening.

They were: the first generation Patriarch, Fang Shoudao, Fang Yanxu, Fang Danyun and Fang Daozi.

Everyone else, including Ji Xiufang and the three Quasi-Dao experts, as well as everyone else in the Fang Clan, was affected by the magic.

Meng Hao panted as he saw fighting clan members separate and move back in time to their original positions. Even more shocking to Meng Hao was that he could actually... see himself.

He saw the entire fight with Fang Wei. He saw the deaths of Fang Wei, Fang Xiushan, and Fang Heshan, all playing in reverse. Everyone who should have been dead, was now alive.

To be able to watch such things happening led to an indescribable feeling. Meng Hao was completely rattled.

Throughout the entire Fang Clan, time flowed in reverse. The blood that stained the ground vanished, and everyone who had died appeared alive once again, until finally, everyone was watching Meng Hao and Fang Wei fighting up in midair.

Suddenly, in the blink of an eye, everything went motionless.

Meng Hao stood there, expression blank as he stared.

It was at this point that the first generation Patriarch waved his hand again, causing all of the members of the Fang Clan who had died to all vanish. The loyal ones disappeared in the blink of an eye, leaving behind only the traitorous clan members.

Even Fang Wei disappeared.

Next, the first generation Patriarch clenched his hand into a fist. Rumbling sounds could be heard as the world in front of him collapsed. As it did, numerous dots of light could be seen falling down to the ground.

Back in the ancestral mansion, the loyal clan members who had died could now be seen, their expressions blank but tinged with disbelief.

“What just happened? I remember... I remember dying!”

“What is this place? Is this... still the Fang Clan?”

“Just what exactly is going on!?” The resurrected members of the Fang Clan looked around in shock. The surrounding traitorous clan members began to tremble violently. Then, blood sprayed out of their mouths and their gazes went dark as they toppled dead to the ground.

The Second Patriarch died. The Fourth and Sixth Patriarchs... died. They all died.

There was not a single exception!

Anyone who had betrayed the clan instantly died!

It was as if their deaths were the price that had to be paid to return the dead clan members to life!

Meng Hao looked out into the crowds and saw a young man who was... none other than Fang Wei!

As Fang Wei looked around, his expression was at first blank. However, his eyes quickly grew clear, and eventually, he found himself looking back at Meng Hao. His expression was a complex one as he sighed inwardly.

The cultivators of the various sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea watched with spinning minds. Even the Dao Realm Patriarchs were trembling, and looked terrified.

“A transformation between life and death? I can’t believe that the first generation Patriarch of the Fang Clan... has actually reached such a realm!!”

“But, how come I feel that this isn’t transformation, but rather... that he actually reached back in time, grabbed those dead people, and then pulled them here. W-what kind of cultivator is he? To be able to do something like that is absolutely terrifying!!”

“How enigmatic! The Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch is impossible to predict!!”

As of this moment, Meng Hao finally realized why his father had been so certain that he was completely safe.... Also, he was now completely sure that his father had played a part in this plan regarding the first generation Patriarch.

“Fudge!” he thought. “Of course I was completely safe. Even if I died, the first generation Patriarch could bring me back.... But... but a magical technique like that is simply too Heaven-defying! How could a Dao like that even exist!?” His heart still surged with waves of shock. For some reason, he had the feeling that the terrifying first generation Patriarch’s magical technique was something that could only be used a limited number of times.

Also, it must surely come with some sort of backlash effect, as well as... other limitations. Otherwise, the Fang Clan couldn’t possibly have lost their war with the Ji Clan!

“Could it be that it only works on Planet East Victory?” he thought, his eyes narrowing. Then he thought back to something Fang Shoudao had said.

Planet East Victory is not the same Planet East Victory it used to be.... Meng Hao’s heart trembled, and an idea suddenly popped up in his mind.

He thought about how the ultimate form of One Thought Stellar Transformation was... to transform into a planet!

His eyes went wide as he looked down at the ground beneath his feet. He almost couldn’t believe that it was true.

“So THIS... is the Fang Clan?” he thought, his mind reeling.

Almost in the same moment that the members of the Fang Clan were resurrected, Ji Xiufang’s heart filled with waves of astonishment. A critical sensation of life and death danger filled her. Without any further hesitation, she tried to flee, flying up into the air toward the starry sky. Whether or not she could succeed in escaping was irrelevant, she had no choice but to try.

She had never before seen a Daoist magic like this one, and seeing all of the members of the Fang Clan being resurrected filled her with intense fear.

It was the same with the three Quasi-Dao old men. Although they were insane, they were still capable of feeling fear. Scalps numb, faces pale, they turned and fled.

Fang Daozi stared blankly as the other clan members were resurrected, and slowly, a look of bitterness appeared in his eyes.

“It was all just a play,” Fang Shoudao said softly, looking at Fang Daozi with a look that contained both empathy and pity.

A play. A play in which even the Ji Clan had become nothing but actors, actors come to participate in a grand performance. The fact that the first generation Patriarch could be so domineering as to plot out such an enormous play caused Meng Hao to inhale deeply in shock.

However, he still had a strange feeling. Why... did the first generation Patriarch seem to... completely lack any sort of expression?

“Considering that father managed to reach the point of being able to transform into a planet,” said Fang Daozi, a complex expression flickering in his eyes, “if he had wanted to find me, it would have been a simple matter.” He looked hesitatingly toward Fang Shoudao.

“Because your father didn’t want that,” Fang Shoudao explained.

When Fang Daozi heard that, he began to shake. Then he threw his head back and burst out with bitter, uproarious laughter. He turned to look at the first generation Patriarch in his green robe, his expression one of grief, fury, and countless other emotions.

Considering who he was, and the level of his cultivation base, how could he not understand the situation? The first generation Patriarch in front of him was not his father’s true self. His father... was really and truly dead.

What had appeared right now was, not really a clone, but actually... his father incarnated as a planet, then left behind as a trump card for the Fang Clan.

He was... the soul of the planet!

It was the soul of his father in a different state of existence!

Despite being dead, despite being the soul of a planet, he still complied with the dying wishes of the first generation Patriarch and did not seek out the reincarnated version of Fang Daozi, who harbored such evil intentions toward the clan.

“After the first generation Patriarch passed away into meditation, he left behind some dying words that I came to hear after I became the Earth Patriarch. Only recently did I come to understand that those words were actually meant for you.

“He believed that eventually, the day would come in some particular generation that you would become the Fang Clan’s Earth Patriarch, and thus, he left those words behind for you.” Fang Shoudao looked at Fang Daozi with a complicated expression.

"Those words were... Everything I told you the year that I suppressed you... was true."

“True.... True....” Fang Daozi began to laugh with even greater bitterness. He looked over again at the figure of his father, a middle-aged man in a green robe. He would never forget the year that his father suppressed him, and what he had said. Back when he and the Ji Clan both followed Lord Li on the campaign trail, the Ji Clan had sown Karma onto the newly born Fang Daozi.

That Karma was very deep, and required the expenditure of almost all of Lord Ji’s cultivation base, such that even the first generation Patriarch couldn’t detect it.

By the time he did, it was too late. He went to war with the Ji Clan, not for rulership of the Ninth Mountain and Sea, but rather, for revenge.

Fang Daozi laughed bitterly, then flew up into the air, his thoughts in chaos. He no longer wished to remain on Planet East Victory, nor to see the other members of the Fang Clan. His head hurt, and madness filled him as he shot up into the starry sky.

Meng Hao felt torn as he watched Fang Daozi. Then he turned to look at the first generation Patriarch, and couldn’t help but think about Ke Yunhai and Ke Jiusi. He also thought about his own father.

“Fang Xiufeng, Fang Xiufeng,” he sighed. The more he thought about the situation, the angrier Meng Hao got. “Are you really my dad...? You were willing to throw your own son into a perilous situation like this? Well, you’re my dad so I can’t say anything, but is mom going to let you off the hook?”

Fang Shoudao did nothing to stop Fang Daozi. He watched him attempting to leave, then clasped hands and bowed deeply toward the first generation Patriarch.

“Patriarch, please execute those who have offended our clan!”

The first generation Patriarch’s expression was the same as ever as he extended his right hand and pointed up into the sky. Rumbling could be heard, and a monstrous killing aura could be sensed. Shockingly... that aura did not come from the first generation Patriarch, but rather... it exploded out from the planet itself.

In that moment, all of the plants and trees on Planet East Victory, all of the numerous buildings, all of the living things, exploded with the desire to kill. This was the wrath of an entire planet!

The intense killing intent surged up into the sky, passing Fang Daozi without hurting him in the least. However, when it slammed into the Quasi-Dao experts, the three old men were instantly killed.

Wiping them out was as easy as crushing dried weeds. They weren’t even qualified to fight back. Booms could be heard as they were transformed directly into ash. Then, the killing intent spread out further into the starry sky, where it caught up to Ji Xiufang. Her level of terror couldn’t have been any higher as the killing intent slashed toward her.

“Patriarch, save me!!” she screamed, scared out of her mind. Despite being a Dao Realm expert, compared to the killing intent of an entire planet, she was weak beyond compare!

As of this moment, all of the powers in the Ninth Mountain and Sea were being given a demonstration... of the supremely domineering power that the Fang Clan had kept hidden for so long!

They were using actions to tell everyone that the Fang Clan... was just as powerful as it had always been! Anyone who offended the Fang Clan... would be executed no matter how far they tried to run!

Chapter 1005: Hope Regarding the Ancient Realm!

As the killing intent of virtually the entire planet began to envelop Ji Xiufang, an ancient voice calmly spoke out from the Ninth Mountain, echoing out to fill the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“Elder Brother Fang....” said the voice, seemingly filling the entire starry sky of the Ninth Mountain and Sea. Planets trembled, and innumerable ripples shrank down into the form of an eye.

Within that eye, an old man sat cross-legged. He had white hair, and looked very ancient, and as he spoke, he lifted his right hand and pointed toward Planet East Victory.

As he pointed, boundless ripples spread out through the starry sky, covering Planet East Victory as if to prevent the first generation Patriarch from attacking.

Up to now, the first generation Patriarch hadn't spoken a single word. Now, his hoarse voice echoed out, speaking a single sentence that caused the ripples in the starry sky to suddenly stop in place.

“I demand rectification!”

At the same time, Ji Xiufang screamed miserably. The sound echoed out as her head was separated from her body. Her body was then crushed into nothing but fragments, as if by a gigantic hand.

She was annihilated, destroyed in both spirit and body!

Even an almighty Dao Realm expert couldn't stand up to a single blow from the killing intent of the first generation Patriarch!

In the moment that Ji Xiufang died, a boom could be heard as the killing intent slammed violently into the sealing shield surrounding Planet East Victory. Cracking sounds could be heard as the spell, being maintained by the combined forces of three of the Ji Clan's Dao Realm experts, collapsed into pieces.

It shattered into countless tiny pieces that were swept up by a massive wind, which then blew them away from Planet East Victory. Innumerable fissures then opened up in the void, spreading out in a way that resembled a spider web.

The three Dao Realm experts were scared witless, and their minds filled with roaring. Their faces fell as they did everything they could think of to escape, even to the point of unleashing Essence power.

However... the killing intent from Planet East Victory was as intense as ever, enough to shake all of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“Patriarch, save us!!” The three Dao Realm experts were so scared they felt as if their scalps were about to explode. An intense sensation of deadly crisis filled them, a feeling of fear that they had not experienced for a long, long time. It was as if... the killing intent from Planet East Victory wanted to wipe them clean away from the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Any one of these people could set foot onto any planet in the Ninth Mountain and Sea and make it tremble. A mere glance from them could send a sect rising to the top, or could destroy it. But now, they were so terrified that their hearts were trembling.

They knew that the killing intent of the Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch... could prevent them from entering reincarnation. They would never be reborn, and would truly be erased from the world.

They could only watch as the killing intent bore down on them, three Dao Realm Patriarchs of the Ji Clan. It was at this point that more ripples spread out through the starry sky, as if some power were forcefully interposing itself between the killing intent and the three old men. The ripples formed together into a huge, illusory eye.

The eye appeared to be ancient, and as soon as it appeared, it stared fixedly at the killing intent.

“Elder Brother Fang, enough! You’re not a match for me.”

The killing intent came to a stop in front of the eye. Scintillating light spread out as it formed into the shape of a person. It was the first generation Patriarch, who hovered there, formed from countless motes of shining light that made his visage somewhat blurry.

At the same time, the old man sitting cross-legged within the eye looked over calmly at the first generation Patriarch.

“I might not be able to seal the Heavens, but I can shatter the Heavens of the Ninth Mountain and Sea,” the first generation Patriarch said coolly. As his voice echoed out, Meng Hao was standing down on Planet East Victory. Even with the level of his cultivation base, he was able to see what was happening. He looked up into the sky and saw the killing intent of the first generation Patriarch. He watched him slaughter a Dao Realm expert, and then cause the other three Dao Realm cultivators to flee for their lives. All of this caused Meng Hao’s eyes to gleam with a strange light.

“One of these days, I’m going to be just as powerful as him!” he thought, panting. When he heard the first generation Patriarch’s words, an even stranger expression rose up on his face.

“How come it seems like these two guys are playing chess? One of them knows he can’t outplay the other, but he still gives the impression that if he gets pissed off enough, he could just flip over the game board....” Meng Hao cleared his throat. For some reason he suddenly realized that he quite liked the style of the first generation Patriarch.

Up in the starry sky, the old man in the giant eye didn’t respond to the Fang Clan’s first generation Patriarch.

“The Ji Clan is not permitted to step half a pace into the starry sky surrounding Planet East Victory,” the first generation Patriarch said slowly.

The old man in the giant eye looked deeply at the first generation Patriarch, then slowly nodded. Finally, the eye flew backward, enveloped the three Dao Realm experts, and then vanished.

The matter of Ji Xiufang and the three Quasi-Dao old men wasn’t brought up.... Apparently, the Ji Clan was willing to give them up as the price to pay to the Fang Clan to end the situation.

When the giant eye faded away, the image of the first generation Patriarch also disappeared. No figure was visible, and the killing intent vanished. Everything went back to normal.

However, the Ninth Mountain and Sea was only beginning to be shaken.

All of the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea witnessed the rise of the Fang Clan that day. They personally watched as the Fang Clan of former glory, which had remained quiet and silent for so many years, once again became one of the most domineering forces in the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea.

Even the Ji Clan had to pay the price, which caused all cultivators to gasp. Now, they looked toward the Fang Clan with expressions of shock and fear.

The Fang Clan had remained quiet for a long time, leading many people in the Ninth Mountain and Sea to believe that their strength was just for show. Now, such notions were shattered. The Fang Clan made it very clear to everyone that they were just as domineering as they always had been!

The reappearance of the first generation Patriarch, despite him being a clone, or more accurately, the soul of Planet East Victory, caused everyone who witnessed the event to be thoroughly shaken. Furthermore, it became known that, in addition to the first generation Patriarch, the Fang Clan had two Dao Realm experts. In the end, though, it was the first generation Patriarch himself that was the most shocking deterrent.

Considering the Ji Clan was incapable of exterminating the Fang Clan, how could any of the other sects and clans possibly be qualified to be on an equal footing with them?

The Ninth Mountain and Sea was completely and utterly shaken.

The Dao Realm Patriarchs of the various sects and clans mused on the matter silently. It was now with great caution and fear that they looked toward Planet East Victory and the Fang Clan.

The first generation Patriarch had slaughtered Dao Realm experts, instilling such fear that they could only gasp in response.

“Considering the Fang Clan is like this, they fully deserve to be called... the despots of the Ninth Mountain and Sea.”

“When the Fang Clan revealed all their trump cards in that battle, and allowed everyone to see, you would think that would remove some of their air of mystery. And yet... that final trump card is simply too astonishing....”

After much thought, the Dao Realm experts sighed and returned to their various organizations.

It was in this manner that the upheavals of the Fang Clan ended. The Fang Clan was the clear winner. The fangs bared by the Ji Clan were shorn clean, and they were forced to pay the price of one Dao Realm expert and three Quasi-Dao cultivators.

At the same time, the problem of the traitors within the Fang Clan was handled perfectly. After the baptism of blood, the Fang Clan... was more stable than ever.

In addition to the presence of the first generation Patriarch, the Fang Clan also had a worthy successor. First was Meng Hao, who was already stunning beyond compare, a person the Ninth Mountain and Sea would never forget. Joining Meng Hao was Fang Wei.

The fact that Fang Wei was focused on defending the clan to the death was something that many people had noted.

Meng Hao and Fang Wei were now objects of admiration and envy on the part of the other sects and clans.

“First they have Meng Hao, who stifled all of the members of his generation! His path... will definitely stretch far and wide. And then there’s Fang Wei. He might be a bit weaker than Meng Hao, but he’s strong enough to defend the clan!”

“One will wage battle outside the clan, the other will remain inside to defend it! With the two of them, the Fang Clan will only achieve greater heights of glory....”

“No wonder the Ji Clan attacked the Fang Clan. It won’t be too long before... the Fang Clan might be strong enough to contend with Lord Ji for control of the Heavens again. After all, they’re the Fang Clan, ya know? They used to be just like the Ji Clan, a powerful clan of warriors!”

“The Ji Clan has their Karma, and the Fang Clan has their reincarnation. Two warrior clans who caused a rain of blood to fall upon the Ninth Mountain and Sea back in the day....”

The war of the Fang Clan ended. However, it didn’t take long before the various sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea sprang into action. Various Patriarchs prepared to personally take their Chosen to Planet East Victory to offer congratulatory gifts due to the appearance of the first generation Patriarch.

After the Ji Clan left, Planet East Victory returned to normal. The only thing that remained of the traitorous clan members was their blood that stained the ground, and the reek of gore that filled the air. The resurrected clan members were filled with complex feelings. Under the direction of the Grand Elder, the recovery work began.

Fang Wei stood there silently. After looking around, bitterness rose up in his heart, and he bowed his head.

The first generation Patriarch did not stay. The whole clan bowed deeply in respect as he reentered the rift to the ancestral land. In the moment before he disappeared, he turned and looked at Meng Hao for a moment.

In that moment, a tremor ran through Meng Hao, and the first generation Patriarch's voice suddenly rang out in his mind.

“You have signs of the legacy of Lord Li on you.... The legacy of Lord Li is connected to East Victory. At the same time, it is no longer on Planet East Victory; it has already been acquired by a cultivator from this planet.

“As for the Ji Clan sowing chaos here in the Fang Clan, that also had to do with the legacy. Actually, the legacy was used simply to draw out the Ji Clan; a strategy, that's all. However, when the time comes to activate it, if it is connected to you by destiny, then you should be able to do so.

“One Thought Stellar Transformation.... Without a bloodline clone, it's impossible to cultivate it to the final degree!

“Nirvana Fruits... use them well. The members of the Fang Clan have four lives. If you combine them together at the right time, then you can open... the door to the Ancient Realm!

“You and I are connected by destiny, drawn together by blood.... The Ancient Realm begins with Dao Fruit, but you... if you begin with Nirvana Fruit, then you can accomplish something completely unheard of and shake the entire Nine Mountains and Seas!”

The ancient voice echoed in Meng Hao's ears before fading away. Meng Hao trembled as he watched the first generation Patriarch step into the rift and then vanish.

After hearing the Patriarch's words, Meng Hao's eyes began to shine. Gradually he came to a new understanding. Before, he had been confused as to the role played by the Nirvana Fruits in the whole matter. How effective would they have been if Fang Heshan had been able to resist the urge to spring into action? If that had happened, wouldn't it mean that the entire series of events simply wouldn't have occurred?

Meng Hao now understood that the core element of the plan hadn't been his Nirvana Fruits, but rather, the revelation regarding the legacy of Lord Li. That was why the Ji Clan had made their move.

“One Thought Stellar Transformation... a Daoist magic that, when cultivated to the ultimate degree, can be used to incarnate into a planet...” The starstone in his left eye glittered, causing his heart to pound even faster. According to what the first generation Patriarch had said, the Ancient Realm... was not too far away for him.

“I have two Nirvana Fruits from the first generation Patriarch, and two of my own. Nirvana Fruits can allow members of the Fang Clan bloodline to live four lives!

“Four Nirvana Fruits, when I can absorb all of them with no time limit... that... is when I will step into the Ancient Realm!” Meng Hao's eyes shone with a bright light. The sight of the first generation Patriarch slaughtering members of the Dao Realm once again flashed in his mind.

Chapter 1006: The Sword and the Shield of this Generation!

Meng Hao took a deep breath, and his eyes shone with a brilliant light. After a moment, he sent some divine will into the terracotta soldier.

The terracotta soldier could not stay outside of the ancestral land for a long time. After receiving Meng Hao's instructions via divine will, it faced him, then clasped hands and bowed. Meng Hao didn't feel like parting with it, and yet could only watch as it entered the rift and turned into a statue once again.

“One day I'll do the same thing as the first generation Patriarch! I'll use a piece of the Ruins of Immortality... to take you away. That way you... can accompany me as I wage war among the Heavens!” Meng Hao made this promise to the terracotta soldier deep in his heart. It was a promise, a guarantee, much the same as the one he had made to Han Shan that year in the Realm of the Bridge Ruins. He would never forget such promises.

After the terracotta soldier entered the ancestral Land, the rift closed, and then vanished.

The sky above the Fang Clan returned to its normal state. However, the land itself seemed wasted. Signs of withering could be seen on countless plants and trees, and the spiritual energy of the entire planet had apparently been reduced.

Although the upheavals in the clan had not resulted in any overt losses, in reality, the entire planet had been weakened, not to mention the loss of all the traitorous clan members.

Meng Hao stood there thoughtfully for a moment before coming to the conclusion that the weakening of Planet East Victory must have something to do with the first generation Patriarch's awakening.

An intensely powerful entity like that, a person willing to flip the game board over rather than continue playing, who could strike fear into the heart of Lord Ji himself, could obviously not be awakened easily.

By now it was evening and, off in the distance, the sun was scattering its twilight rays over the land. The resurrected clan members were lost in reminiscence, thinking about the many people who had once existed around them. No wild joy broke out because of the resolution of the chaos in the clan.

In contrast, heavy sighs existed in the hearts of all the clan members.

The ordinary clan members felt this way, and Fang Wei even more so. It was the same with Fang Shoudao, Fang Yanxu, and Fang Danyun, who hovered silently in midair.

"It's over," Fang Shoudao said softly, looking out over the entire Fang Clan. His voice was deep and archaic, and as it echoed out, all of the clan members looked up into the sky.

"Mortal bodies can sometimes contract vile ailments. If sicknesses like that are not expunged, they can lead to death.

"Clans can also be infected with ailments!

"Yesterday, a foul disease lurked deep within the Fang Clan. If it were to explode out, it would definitely affect the entire clan! Today, that ailment was rooted out. Although our Fang Clan is now grieving and in pain, at least we now have a new lease on life!

"Tomorrow will be a new day for us! We will cause all cultivators of the Ninth Mountain and Sea to recall the glory of the Fang Clan!

“I will no longer remain in secluded meditation. From now on, I will assume the office of Clan Chief. I will lead the Fang Clan to unparalleled heights of glory!” As Fang Shoudao’s words echoed out, it caused flames to ignite in the eyes of all of the members of the Fang Clan down below. It was as if his voice carried some mysterious power that entered the clan members’ hearts and caused them to burn with determination.

Fang Wei stood there silently, completely alone, with no clan members even willing to approach him. He had no friends left. His father, his grandfather, and all of the other members of his bloodline were all dead.

He was the only one who had been resurrected.

Fang Yanxu hovered in midair, looking at Fang Wei immersed in his bitterness, and sighed inwardly. He waved his finger down toward Fang Wei, causing him to shudder, and then suddenly lurch up into the air. All members of the clan watched as he flew over toward Fang Yanxu.

As Meng Hao watched what was happening, he suddenly realized that Fang Wei’s corpse had long since vanished from within his bag of holding.

“Are you still willing to defend the Fang Clan?” Fang Yanxu asked calmly.

Fang Wei began to tremble. After a long moment of silence, he looked down at the other members of the Fang Clan, and at Meng Hao. Finally, he turned back to Fang Yanxu, clasped hands, and bowed deeply.

“To defend the Fang Clan has been my primary aspiration in life!”

By this point, all of the members of the Fang Clan were staring silently at Fang Wei. All of them remembered the tragic scene in which he had died; those images were engraved deeply on their hearts.

Fang Yanxu looked at Fang Wei for a long moment, and it almost seemed as if he were looking into the young man’s heart. After a long moment, a slight smile appeared on his face.

“Henceforth, you will follow me. In the future... you must live up to your name and protect the clan! You will not be the sword of the clan; instead, you will become... its shield!”

Fang Wei was shaking, and tears streamed down his face as he clasped hands and bowed toward Fang Yanxu.

Fang Yanxu sighed, then turned and bowed to Fang Shoudao. Then he waved his hand and departed with Fang Wei, the two of them turning into beams of colorful light that shot away from the Fang Clan in the direction of the Medicine Immortal Sect.

Fang Danyun and Fang Shoudao watched them leave, and sighed inwardly.

Fang Yanxu was the current generation's shield, and also its shadow!

Fang Shoudao was the clan's sword, as well as its glory, boundless and supreme!

In every generation of the clan, there would be a blazing sun who shone with boundless light, and behind that person, there would be a shadow. That shadow was there to assist the blazing sun, to help that person accomplish many things they themselves could not, to endure more than was possible, to deal with things that could not be touched by the other. Such persons were not shining swords that garnered mass attention. Instead, they became... shields that others would eventually overlook!

A person like that had to be willing to remain silent and unobtrusive. They had to shrink from the light, give up all their status and position, abandon all glory. They were a shadow, and the shield of the clan.

In this generation, Fang Yanxu picked Fang Wei as his future successor.

It was a path that ordinary clan members might not understand. However, Meng Hao understood everything, and it caused him to tremble. His expression was a complex one as he stared at Fang Wei, recalling what he looked like as a child, and the resolute words he had spoken in his tender, young voice.

“My name is Fang Wei! I want to become a powerful expert because I'm going to defend my clan for my whole life!”

The Seventh Patriarch, the Fifth Patriarch, and the Third Patriarch, the Ancient Realm experts also watched Fang Yanxu and Fang Wei leaving, their expressions gradually flickering with understanding.

This was the Fang Clan, a place where clan rules ensured the continued glory of the clan. In each generation, there were two important people, one who existed in the light, the other in darkness. One was the sword, the other was the shield.

One basked in glory, the other was like a shadow.

Meng Hao now also understood why, although the first generation Patriarch had passed away into meditation, his clone had transformed into a planet, to defend the clan. It was because the first generation Patriarch's true self had been the clan's sword, whereas his clone was the shield.

Even though his true self ended up dying, his clone could continue to defend the clan throughout all eternity....

"The Fang Clan..." he murmured. Gradually, he was beginning to approve of the clan much more than he had before.

Fang Danyun bowed to Fang Shoudao, then looked down at Meng Hao with a smile. It was a smile of encouragement, praise, and even more, anticipation, anticipation that he could accomplish something momentous that was far different than what Fang Wei had done.

Smiling, he turned and left, heading back to his home in the Dao of Alchemy Division. His longevity was reaching its end, and even given the fact that he could split with his Unicorn Immortals, it would be hard for him to hold on for much longer. Yet, he was without any regrets.

He hoped to use the rest of his life to once again lead the clan's Dao of Alchemy Division into glory.

Much about the Medicine Immortal Sect, the shield of the clan, were merely stories that had been purposefully created by the Fang Clan. However, one thing was true: of the clan's three Holy medicinal pills, the Medicine Immortal Sect really could concoct two, something that the Dao of Alchemy Division was incapable of.

The clan members down on the ground below now burned with determination to see the clan rise to prominence. They began to reconstruct the many areas of the ancestral mansion that were in ruins, and wash away the blood that soaked the ground. It wouldn't take long to restore them. Perhaps by the following morning... the Fang Clan would not look very different than it had before, at least not to any outsider.

Fang Shoudao watched Fang Yanxu and Fang Danyun leave, then began to leave himself. The Seventh Patriarch and the others all joined him.

Meng Hao blinked, then cleared his throat. The sound wasn't very loud, but it was enough to echo out in the air and be heard by Fang Shoudao and the others. However, Fang Shoudao pretended that he didn't hear it and continued off into the distance.

Meng Hao was now starting to get the sense that something fishy was going on. Although the Ji Clan had come because of the legacy of Lord Li, and would likely still have caused a disturbance even if things had not played out the way they had regarding Meng Hao...

In Meng Hao's opinion, he had been part of the plan all along, and although he didn't mind being used by the clan, what he did mind was... being used and not getting anything out of it!

"Hey, they should give me some money!" he thought. "I sacrificed a lot to help out! I was scared to death on multiple occasions, and suffered serious mental trauma! At the very least, they have to give me some sort of explanation, right?!"

Feeling very wronged, he stared at Fang Shoudao and the others receding into the distance, and then called out in a loud voice, "Patriarchs, hold on a moment!"

As soon as the words left his mouth, Fang Shoudao and the others' faces flickered. However, they waved their sleeves, and their bodies began to fade as they teleported away.

Meng Hao was now getting very anxious.

"Patriarchs, wait! Don't run away!! Hey, you old fogies, STOP R I G H T THERE!"

Fang Shoudao and the others were about half faded away when Meng Hao suddenly burst out in anger. When the other clan members in the ancestral mansion heard his words, their hearts began to pound.

Fang Shoudao suddenly stopped in place, and his vanishing form rapidly grew clear. Realizing that he had no way to get out of the situation, he turned and glared sternly at Meng Hao.

“You little hoodlum! I’m your grandfather’s grandfather! Do you really dare to call me an old fogey!?”

Thinking about how irritated he was, Meng Hao braced himself and retorted loudly: “Why wouldn’t I dare? I didn’t do anything wrong! I performed some heroic services for the clan just now!”

Fang Shoudao stared at him wide-eyed, then suddenly swished his sleeve. In a flash, Meng Hao vanished from his position in midair, to reappear inside of a building.

He glanced around cautiously, then backed up a few paces.

Fang Shoudao laughed in spite of himself as he sat there off to the side, looking expectantly at Meng Hao.

“You feel wronged, huh?” he said. “Go ahead and explain yourself.”

“During the clan upheavals, I spilled blood for the clan!” replied Meng Hao instantly. As soon as the words left his mouth, Fang Shoudao waved his hand, causing a softly glowing light to wash over Meng Hao. Instantly, all of his wounds were healed. Actually, his wounds had already recovered by more than half, but now they were completely recovered, and even the pores of his entire body had opened up. In fact, his cultivation base was now even more stable than before.

“There you go, all healed up,” Fang Shoudao said with a slight smile. As he looked at Meng Hao with that smile, he looked like nothing more than a wily old fox.

“During the battle, I ate a ton of medicinal pills!” Meng Hao continued carefully. “I even had to absorb quite a bit of Immortal jade! AND spirit stones!” After he finished speaking, Fang Shoudao waved his hand again. This time, no softly glowing light appeared, but instead, a bright screen. Visible on the screen was a detailed accounting of everything that had happened from the moment Meng Hao had transcended his tribulation, to the end of the battle. During that time... he had not consumed any medicinal pills, nor had he absorbed any Immortal jade, let alone spirit stones.

Meng Hao's heart trembled, but his expression was unprecedentedly solemn as he looked at fox-like Fang Shoudao. All of a sudden, he realized that he was up against a formidable opponent.

Chapter 1007: The Old Fox vs. the Fox Cub!

“When I was fighting those Chosen, I was fighting for the glory of the clan! I made the Fang Clan the center of attention of the whole Ninth Mountain and Sea!” Meng Hao said, staring Fang Shoudao in the eye. He had finally realized that the old man's aura was actually very similar to his own.

“Oh, that's a good point. Very well. Henceforth, you are the number one Chosen of the Fang Clan. Both to those inside the clan and toward outsiders, you now represent the clan itself!” Fang Shoudao waved his hand, causing a golden medallion to fly out in a beam of light and then hover in front of Meng Hao. It was inscribed with the character Fang 方 on one side, and on the other side, the word Chosen 天骄.

Meng Hao stared at the medallion in shock, then glared back at Fang Shoudao. He suddenly had the feeling that he was being toyed with, a serious provocation in the area which he cared most about.

“My heart grows cold with disappointment to be manipulated by the clan like this!” Meng Hao said, gnashing his teeth.

Fang Shoudao waved his finger at Meng Hao, causing a warm feeling to spread across his chest and over his heart.

“Feel a bit warmer now?” he said coolly.

Meng Hao was about to flip his lid. He had never, ever met someone as shameless as this old fogey. He had already explained himself quite thoroughly, and yet had been sidestepped three times in a row.

“During the clan upheavals, I single-handedly stopped the possessed Fang Wei!” he cried. “I saved a bunch of fellow clan members! I even managed to kill Fang Xiushan!”

“I was the one who summoned the Dao Guardsman to fight against the three Quasi-Dao experts! I helped make sure that your plan succeeded!”

“I also killed Fang Heshan!

“In fact, the spark that lit the whole fuse was my Nirvana Fruits!

“I’ve done a lot for the clan and I demand a reward!!”

“Very well, you want cultivation resources, right?” Fang Shoudao said with a sigh. “It seems that about half of your personality is exactly the same as your grandfather.” Feeling a bit guilty, he cleared his throat. He waved his right hand, causing Meng Hao’s eyes to gleam with anticipation. Immediately, a strip of paper appeared in front of Fang Shoudao.

A few swishing sounds could be heard as Fang Shoudao then wrote his name down on the piece of paper.

“I know you’re fond of getting promissory notes,” Fang Shoudao said with a smile, “so I’ve prepared one for you. However much you think the clan owes you, go ahead and write it down yourself.”

Meng Hao gaped at the piece of paper. When he looked up, his eyes were bloodshot. He was about to continue fighting back when Fang Shoudao’s expression suddenly turned serious.

He took a deep breath and stared gravely at Meng Hao. Meng Hao, who had just been on the verge of losing his temper suddenly couldn’t help but reign it in.

“Fang Hao!” Fang Shoudao said, his voice sounding deep and extremely dignified.

“I know of everything you’ve done for the clan, and I understand that you feel wronged,” he continued, his voice now soft and archaic. “I’m even more aware of all the meritorious service you’ve provided. There’s no need to even mention anything else. The simple achievement of opening your Immortal meridians to the pinnacle has shaken the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea. Anyone who did that in any sect or clan would definitely be gifted with a precious treasure.

“It’s the same here! You are just as important to our clan as someone of the Dao Realm!

“Fang Wei will be the shield of the clan, and you... will be the sword!

“Henceforth, he will be the shadow, YOUR shadow! While you bask in glory, he will remain obscure and unknown. That is because you are the true future hope of the clan!”

“Do you really think that the clan is being stingy? Withholding a reward from you?”

“You’re wrong. Let me tell you, the clan would never treat a blazing sun like you with the slightest bit of stinginess. However... are you aware of the price that had to be paid to awaken the first generation Patriarch?”

“The first generation Patriarch passed away in meditation long ago. What you saw earlier was only his clone, or perhaps you could say, the spirit of Planet East Victory. Normally speaking, he remains in slumber. Awakening him causes Planet East Victory to be withered up for a thousand years!”

“In order to ensure that Planet East Victory will continue to rotate normally for the next thousand years, the clan has to pay an indescribable amount of resources. Right now the clan... really has no reward to give you!”

“Furthermore, there is no reward valuable enough to represent how important you are to the clan. Therefore, I have already made an important decision regarding this matter.” Fang Shoudao rose to his feet and looked calmly at Meng Hao.

“I already discussed the matter with your father, as well as Fang Yanxu and Pill Elder, and the decision has been made final. From now on, you... will be the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan!” As soon as the words left Fang Shoudao’s mouth, Meng Hao’s mind began to reel.

“Crown Prince?” Meng Hao gaped for a moment. To virtually any other member of the Fang Clan, a title like that represented supreme glory. However, to Meng Hao, it represented a future of endless amounts of spirit stones and Immortal jade.

“That’s right,” Fang Shoudao continued, his expression somewhat wistful. “Currently, your cultivation base is weak. However, once you reach the Dao Realm, you will be the Clan Chief of the Fang Clan. As you know, it has been many, many years... since a true Clan Chief has arisen.” Fang Shoudao looked at Meng Hao, his expression one of anticipation and love as he extended his hand, causing a command medallion to appear.

It was violet-colored, and glowed with a strange light. Although it was merely a command medallion, it was clearly a rare Ancient Realm treasure!

“This object is the official symbol of your status as Crown Prince. Once you reach the Ancient Realm, you can refine it into a true precious treasure.” Fang Shoudao waved his hand, causing the command medallion to fly over toward Meng Hao, where it settled down into his palm. That small command medallion felt as heavy as a whole mountain.

If Meng Hao didn't possess a True Immortal fleshly body, then he wouldn't even be able to hold it.

“This is your home, and you are a young lord here. In the future, you will be in a position of leadership, and therefore, all of the wealth here will eventually belong to you. If the clan is facing difficulties now, such as being extremely poor, then would it really be the right thing for you to take away the resources of the clan? As a young lord of the clan, you should actually be thinking of ways to increase the clan's wealth!” Fang Shoudao let out a long sigh, and a pained expression appeared on his face.

“If you don't believe me, I can take you to see for yourself.” Fang Shoudao waved his hand, causing both Meng Hao and himself to vanish. When they reappeared, they were inside of an enormous tower.

“Over here is where we used to have a mountain-like collection of Immortal jade. Look at it now....

“This used to be filled with an indescribable amount of spirit stones. Now look at it....

“This area used to be packed tight with all sorts of magical items.”

Fang Shoudao led Meng Hao through the clan's treasure-houses, and although they weren't completely empty, they were depressingly bare. After finishing the tour, Meng Hao felt somewhat deflated.

He almost couldn't believe that the Fang Clan, was actually... destitute.

“Now do you understand? In addition to all this, the clan also bestowed you with that Bloodline Dragon! It was formed from the blood of the Patriarch himself!” Fang Shoudao sighed.

Meng Hao stood there silently for a long moment, then also sighed. Finally, he gave up on any plans of trying to get a reward from the clan. As Fang Shoudao continued to stand there, sighing, Meng Hao turned to leave. Moments ago, he had even taken the time to peruse the treasure-house records, and knew that everything he had seen was the reality of the situation.

He had also gone so far as to scan the lands with divine sense, and could see how withered Planet East Victory was. The places that once flourished with spiritual energy were now dried up. He also closed his eyes and, based on his bloodline, could sense something that no outsider would be able to sense; Planet East Victory was very weak.

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However, in the following days, as the sects and clans of the Ninth Mountain and Sea came to visit Planet East Victory and offered congratulations, everything that he had just seen began to change.

He personally watched as all of the organizations which came to visit Planet East Victory brought significant gifts. If only one sect or clan came to visit, it wouldn't matter. But the Three Churches and Six Sects, the Five Great Holy Lands, and even the other Three Great Clans, as well as other smaller organizations, all arrived. Meng Hao couldn't help but stare in shock.

After doing a bit of calculating, he realized that if you added up the value of all the gifts brought by the various sects and clans, it reached a staggering total.... Although it wouldn't be enough to fill the clan's treasure-houses, it was enough to replenish them by about thirty to forty percent.

As Meng Hao watched Fang Shoudao smilingly receive the various guests, he was increasingly struck with the impression that Fang Shoudao was a crafty, wily fox. The old man had easily conned him, and there was nothing he could do about it. After all, everything the man had said earlier made complete sense.

Meng Hao sighed, and decided just to turn a blind eye to the matter. That was the only way to prevent himself from being incredibly irritated. However, he did not participate in the receiving of the guests, and instead stayed in his residence practicing cultivation, attempting to properly absorb his Nirvana Fruits.

If it was just a simple matter of being conned this once, Meng Hao could deal with it. After all, he was now the Crown Prince, a status which he was very satisfied with. Several days later, however, the Three Great Daoist Societies also arrived, and he heard that they had prepared an even more terrifying amount of congratulatory gifts. Each one of their gifts were comparable to the combined

offerings from several smaller clans put together. This caused Meng Hao to think that something very fishy was going on.

“Elder Brother Shoudao, Hao’er is both Crown Prince of the Fang Clan, as well as a Conclave disciple of the Nine Seas God World. Please accept these meager offerings as the gifts of introduction we would have presented upon his joining the sect.”

When the cultivators from the Nine Seas God World arrived, Fang Xi immediately hustled over to Meng Hao’s residence, where Meng Hao was meditating, to break the news. Meng Hao was instantly enraged, and his eyes went totally bloodshot. As of now, he thoroughly understood how crafty Fang Shoudao was. He had definitely conned Meng Hao... big time.

If Meng Hao weren’t the Crown Prince, the Three Great Daoist Societies would never have prepared such gifts. It was all because of his new status that the gifts the clan was receiving were so valuable.

Meng Hao gritted his teeth and rose to his feet, then flew up into the air toward the main temple hall of the ancestral mansion, to the location where the welcoming feast was being held.

Meng Hao didn’t mind the fact that Fang Shoudao had made him Crown Prince in order to get more gifts from the Three Great Daoist Societies. What he did mind was that in such an important matter as this, Fang Shoudao, that wily old fox, had actually... not given him any share of it! Not even a lousy ten percent! UNACCEPTABLE!

Both the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto and the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite also sent representatives with extravagant gifts. However, in comparison with the gifts offered by the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto and the Nine Seas God World, those given by the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite seemed much more simple.

In the main hall of the Fang Clan ancestral mansion, the Patriarchs of the various sects and clans were all gathered around a long banquet table, where a grand feast was spread out.

“Elder Brother Shoudao, members of any clan or sect may join the Three Great Daoist Societies. That is because the Three Great Daoist Societies are fundamentally quite liberal when dealing with outsiders. That is how we groom generations of Chosen in the Ninth Mountain and Sea.”

“Elder Brother Shoudao, the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto focuses on the sword as our Dao. Hao’er’s father Fang Xiufeng is also known for his Dao of the sword. I truly think that Hao’er would have the most success if he joined the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto!”

The Patriarchs continued to chat and laugh as the Three Great Daoist Societies began to argue and debate amongst themselves over who would get Meng Hao.

Fang Yanxu and Fang Shoudao sat in the middle of everyone. Fang Shoudao was smiling and nodding, and anyone who didn’t know him would think that he looked very kind and gentle. However, when Meng Hao looked at him, he looked like nothing more than the ultimate wily fox.

Chapter 1008: Why The Echelon Exists!

Meng Hao had risen to the top among the true Immortals, and was the Immortal Realm Paragon. After absorbing the Nirvana Fruits, he could leap into the legendary and ancient Immortal Emperor Realm, in which he could slaughter Ancient Realm cultivators with two extinguished Soul Lamps. He had long since shaken the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea.

When you added in his performance as Fang Mu in the Three Great Daoist Societies’ trial by fire, he was clearly the most prominent figure in the Immortal Realm. As a result, each of the Three Great Daoist Societies was determined to have him.

It wasn’t just the Three Great Daoist Societies. The Five Great Holy Lands and the Three Churches and Six Sects were all extremely interested in Meng Hao. If it weren’t for the Three Great Daoist Societies, whose positions were proud and lofty, and the fact that Meng Hao was now the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan, meaning he couldn’t join any other sect BUT one of the Three Great Daoist Societies, then all of the other groups would definitely have started fighting over him.

In addition to the Dao Realm Patriarchs from the other sects, Meng Hao saw various Chosen with whom he had fought earlier. All of them stood there silently, complex emotions swirling in their hearts.

“His father might cultivate the Dao of the sword, but Hao’er’s path is different. He’s already become a Conclave disciple of the Nine Seas God World! How could he possibly join the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto?!” In addition to Fan Dong’er’s master, the old woman, the other person who had come from the Nine Seas God World was none other than the man who had presided over the trial by fire, the same one who had eventually come to praise Meng Hao so much, Ling Yunzi.

“Who cares about that?” said the representative from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto, his tone harsh. “He never formally joined the Nine Seas God World!” He was a middle-aged man, or at least, he looked middle-aged. In reality, his cultivation base was in the Dao Realm, and he looked as dangerous as an unsheathed sword.

Seeing that both the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto and the Nine Seas God World were not budging an inch, the old man who was the representative from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite smiled slightly.

“Fellow Daoist Fang,” he said, “why don’t you summon Meng Hao and ask him his opinion?”

Fang Shoudao laughed heartily, but before he could say anything, the main door to the temple hall echoed with the sound of a cold harrumph. Meng Hao stalked in, instantly drawing the attention of all gazes inside the hall.

As for the Dao Realm Patriarchs, this was their first time seeing Meng Hao in person, as opposed to his illusory image on a screen. It was also the first time anyone from the Three Great Daoist Societies had personally seen Meng Hao after he had reached true Immortal Ascension.

Other than the various members of the Junior generation, all the other people in the hall were Dao Realm Patriarchs. It looked like more than half of all the Dao Realm experts in the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea were present. All of their eyes fell upon Meng Hao, causing him to feel enormous pressure. However, his expression didn’t change at all as he entered the hall. He glared coldly at Fang Shoudao, who cleared his throat a bit guiltily. Fang Yanxu sat off to the side, looking a bit helpless. He coughed dryly a few times.

Everyone was looking at Meng Hao as he stated,

“I will join...”

However, before he could finish speaking, the faces of the three Patriarchs from the Three Great Daoist Societies flickered. Intense gleams appeared in their eyes, especially the white-haired old man from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite. Normally, he looked kind and amiable, but as of this moment, his eyes shone with an extreme brightness.

When the members of the other sects saw this, they stared in shock.

The old man from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite sucked in a deep breath. His expression was very serious as he exchanged a glance with the old woman from the Nine Seas God World and the middle-aged man from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto. Then he turned back to Fang Shoudao and spoke gravely, “Elder Brother Fang, permit us the use of a private chamber!”

Fang Shoudao’s eyes narrowed. He could tell something strange was going on, but after a moment of consideration, he nodded.

Meng Hao was a bit astonished, and quickly swallowed the words he had been about to utter.

Fang Shoudao waved his hand and immediately he, along with Meng Hao and the three old-timers from the Three Great Daoist Societies, all vanished from the main hall. Fang Yanxu was also disconcerted, but this was the Fang Clan after all, so he wasn’t worried. Instead, he smiled and began to chat with some of the others who remained behind.

It didn’t take long for the sound of conversation and laughter to fill the main hall once again. However, suspicions now filled the hearts of all the Dao Realm experts, even though it didn’t show on their faces.

Fang Shoudao and the others reappeared within a hidden chamber in the Fang Clan. Meng Hao’s eyes narrowed, and his heart filled with misgivings. He immediately stepped back a few paces.

“Fellow Daoists,” said Fang Shoudao, “please explain why we need to use this private chamber!” Fang Shoudao might be an old fox and he might have conned Meng Hao, but as he stepped forward, he placed himself very close to Meng Hao. If anything untoward happened, he would go all out with his cultivation base to make sure Meng Hao stayed safe.

Despite the previous con, everything he had said was actually true. Meng Hao really was as important to the Fang Clan as a Dao Realm expert. Furthermore, appointing Meng Hao to be the Crown Prince had not been a joke. He really and truly did have that status in the clan.

Seeing Fang Shoudao act in this way finally caused Meng Hao to have the feeling that the man really was the clan’s Earth Patriarch.

“Elder Brother Fang, this is our first time seeing Meng Hao in person,” said the old man from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite. “On previous occasions, we only saw him on illusory screens, and could not feel... the ripples which are emanating off of him!” The old man looked excited, and

breathed heavily when he looked at Meng Hao. The old woman from the Nine Seas God World and the middle-aged cultivator from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto looked equally moved.

Fang Shoudao frowned, taking a few more steps forward to stand directly next to Meng Hao, whereupon he stared coldly at the other three.

“For Hao’er to reach this point means he definitely has his destiny. He is the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan, and if anybody tries to steal his destiny, that person will be crossing the line and provoking the Fang Clan’s wrath!” Fang Shoudao’s expression was extremely serious, and his tone was icy.

Meng Hao stood behind him, staring in shock. All of a sudden, he came to the realization that the true use of being the Crown Prince was a sort of protection. His rise to true Immortality had attracted the attention of the entire Ninth Mountain and Sea, and now that he was the Crown Prince, anyone who harbored untoward thoughts would definitely be stricken with fear.

Meng Hao could sense the care and concern of the Senior generation of the clan, and his heart softened quite a bit. It even caused his perception of Fang Shoudao as a wily fox to lessen quite a bit.

“Elder Brother Fang, you misunderstand,” said the old man from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite, looking over at Meng Hao.

“Meng Hao, back when you disappeared into the Ruins of Immortality, did you by any chance... encounter a white-robed woman?” It was impossible for the old man to conceal the nervousness in his voice as he asked his question. The old woman and the middle-aged cultivator wore equally nervous expressions.

Meng Hao gaped. After a long moment of silence, he slowly nodded his head in response.

“I knew it!” exclaimed the old man, sounded very excited. Strange gleams appeared in the eyes of the old woman and the middle-aged cultivator. The old man took a deep breath and then made a clutching motion, causing a chunk of black stone to appear in his hand.

At the same time, the old woman and the middle-aged cultivator produced similar stones. All three of the rocks emanated mysterious glows as they flew together to form a large stone slab, which hovered in midair.

“Child, place your hand onto that black stone slab,” said the old man, sounding very excited. “Don’t worry, the three of us don’t harbor any ill intentions toward you.” He looked at Meng Hao with anticipation.

Fang Shoudao frowned. The Three Great Daoist Societies were acting very strange as far as he was concerned, and he was just about to intervene when Meng Hao’s eyes glittered. As for Meng Hao, he had long since speculated that the white-robed woman was somehow connected to the Three Great Daoist Societies.

Instead of placing his hand onto the stone slab, he asked, “That white-robed woman... who is she?”

“Long ago, our world did not consist of only nine mountains and nine seas,” responded the old woman from the Nine Seas God World, her voice soft. “During that era, that white-robed woman was one of three supreme Paragons!”

Meng Hao’s mind trembled, and he didn’t respond. Finally, he lifted his right hand and calmly placed it onto the stone slab. He was already aware of exactly what these three people were hoping to see.

Blinding light emanated out as soon as his hand made contact with the stone slab. When the light touched Meng Hao, an ancient magical symbol suddenly appeared on his forehead.

That magical symbol was actually a number!

The number... 13!

13th in the Echelon!

When the old man from the Immortal Ancient Daoist Rite saw the magical symbol in the shape of a number, he threw his head back and laughed. His entire body quivered with excitement. The old woman from the Nine Seas God World began to pant excitedly, and her expression was one of delight. As for the middle-aged man from the Sublime Flow Sword Grotto, he was also panting, and appeared to be going wild with joy.

“The Echelon! As expected, the Echelon!!”

“Meng Hao has actually joined the Echelon!! The Echelon, prescribed and maintained by a Paragon! The Echelon of the Nine Mountains and Seas!! The key to leaving Heaven and Earth!”

“He’s the second from the Ninth Mountain and Sea to enter!!”

Meng Hao pulled his hand back, and the light emanating from the stone slab faded away. Fang Shoudao frowned. Inwardly, he was shocked, not because of the magical symbol that had appeared on Meng Hao’s forehead, but rather, because of the excitement of the representatives from the Three Great Daoist Societies.

“Fellow Daoists, could you please provide an explanation?” he said coolly, becoming even more vigilant than ever.

“Elder Brother Fang, this matter pertains to the mission of our Three Great Daoist Societies,” said the old man. The old woman and the middle-aged man stood off to the side, the expressions on their face solemn once again. “The information we are about to share with you must not be spread beyond this room.

“Every so often, the Three Great Daoist Societies hold a trial by fire. Its purpose is to search for suitable cultivators for that very Paragon to observe as she searches for people qualified to join the Echelon.

“The Echelon determines the true blazing suns of the entire Nine Mountains and Seas. People who join the Echelon are actually qualified to become legends!

“Furthermore, the Echelon is wrapped up in an enormous mystery, a secret that affects all Nine Mountains and Seas! In fact, the origin of Lord Li himself is very likely connected to that mystery!

“For many, many years, the Ninth Mountain and Sea has not produced anyone qualified to join the Echelon. As of today... we now have a second!

“The first person to qualify for the Echelon is no stranger to you. It was actually none other than the first generation Patriarch of your Fang Clan!

“Sadly, although he met the requirements, when the time came for him to accomplish the tasks required by the Paragon, he ended up refusing to comply. He actually renounced his own qualifications.

“Elder Brother Fang, this child cannot join just one of our organizations. He... is actually the sole successor of all Three Great Daoist Societies!

“He is not a disciple, he is a successor!

“When cultivators of the Echelon appear on any of the mountains or seas, they instantly become crucially important to any of the Daoist Societies, and will be protected as such. Elder Brother Shoudao, this child’s path is definitely not limited to the Ninth Mountain and Sea.

“The fighting that goes on amongst those who wish to enter the Echelon is even fiercer than the fighting which goes on among those who wish to be Chosen. As such, we must not allow Meng Hao’s status as a member of the Echelon to spread prematurely. It won’t be long before we arrange for him to leave the Ninth Mountain and Sea and participate in... the Echelon battles of the Nine Mountains and Seas.

“Please place him in our care. We Three Great Daoist Societies are pledged to, and exist solely for the sake of, the Echelon!”

Chapter 1009: I’m Already Married!

Meng Hao’s eyes flashed, and he stood there, silent and unresponsive as he listened to the Three Great Daoist Societies discuss both him and the Echelon with Fang Shoudao. He didn’t mind this. As soon as he had been appointed to the Echelon by that white-robed woman, he had known that the matter would eventually come to be known by others.

Meng Hao was a cautious person, but now that the matter of the Echelon had been discovered by the The Three Great Daoist Societies, trying to conceal the truth would have been pointless. As of now, it made sense for the clan to be made aware of it too; at least then he would have a foundation of protection.

Fang Shoudao didn’t respond at first. After some thought, he finally said, “This is a weighty matter, something I cannot make a decision on by myself. How about this: Fellow Daoists, please return to the hall for now. I’ll discuss the situation with Hao’er privately, and then we’ll give you an answer.”

The representatives from the Three Great Daoist Societies exchanged glances and then nodded. In the blink of an eye, they left the private chamber and reappeared out in the main hall.

After they were gone, Meng Hao glared at Fang Shoudao, who looked back at him, cleared his throat, and then smiled.

From Meng Hao's perspective, that smile looked far too treacherous, causing him give a loud harrumph.

Fang Shoudao cleared his throat, then eyed Meng Hao and said, "I'll give you one percent!" He was well aware that he hadn't brought up the matter of splitting the profits.

"Impossible! I demand fifty percent!" Meng Hao responded immediately.

Fang Shoudao frowned and then said, "All of these gifts are very important to the clan! At the very most, I can give you two percent!"

"Do you know what I've done for the clan? I've—" Meng Hao was just about to launch into a long explanation when Fang Shoudao interrupted with a loud sigh.

"Hao'er, you're the Crown Prince of the clan!" he said, looking very disappointed. He sounded pained as he continued, "Don't you know that as the Crown Prince, you receive special protection from the clan? That shows how much the clan approves of you! How does a piddling profit the likes of which we're discussing now compare to that?"

"This is your home!"

"And right now, your home is in a very tight spot! The first generation Patriarch is sleeping, and the planet is weak. Other than the resources spent on the fundamental cultivation needs of the clan, everything else is used on the planet itself.

"Plus, we have to be on guard against the Ji Clan! In addition to all that, we have to keep some resources in reserve in case we need to awaken the first generation Patriarch again. Meng Hao... do you understand what I'm saying?"

“Considering all of those things, how could the clan possibly agree to send our magnificent Crown Prince to the Three Great Daoist Societies to practice cultivation?!”

“The Fang Clan is your home, and you are one of our family members! You’re even a young lord of the clan! Now is the time for you to forgo a bit of profit to ensure that the clan can have some breathing room. Can you agree to that?”

“In the future, everything in the clan will belong to you, right?”

“If you think this isn’t fair, then go ahead and just take all the gifts! I don’t want any of it!” With that, Fang Shoudao closed his eyes and sighed.

Meng Hao stood there silently. All of a sudden he felt like he really was putting too much emphasis on wealth, and felt a bit bad. Finally, he nodded his head.

“No, I’m fine,” he said. “Forget about it...”

Fang Shoudao opened his eyes, and the kindness in them was apparent as he patted Meng Hao on the shoulder.

“Good boy...” he said. Then he waved his sleeve, causing both of them to vanish and reappear in the main hall.

The banquet continued, and eventually, it was with much anticipation that the Three Great Daoist Societies listened as Meng Hao announced that he would join their ranks. However, Fang Shoudao, citing Meng Hao’s cultivation base as the reason, said that they would have to return in three months to accept him officially.

Meng Hao was crestfallen. Although he understood that the clan was in a very difficult situation, when he thought about the vast amount of spirit stones pouring in, not a single one of which were going to him, it filled his heart with pain.

“Ah, it doesn’t matter. The Patriarch was right. I’m a member of the clan, and should act as such.” Consoling himself all the way, Meng Hao said his goodbyes and then stepped out of the hall. Just when he was about to fly away, two bright beams of light whistled through the air toward the main hall.

Members of the Fang Clan flew nearby in escort, and as the beams of light neared, it turned out to be people from the Li Clan. One was Li Ling'er, whose face was grim and unsightly. Next to her was a middle-aged man who had the bearing of a transcendent being. His features were handsome, and his aura was extremely strong with the power of Essence.

When Li Ling'er saw Meng Hao, she gritted her teeth, and her eyes blazed with fury. In contrast, the middle-aged man's eyes shone brightly, and he laughed heartily.

"Ah, handsome as expected," he said. "Before, I could only observe with divine sense, but now that I can look upon you in person, kid, I have to say, excellent. Truly excellent!" The man laughed as he walked into the hall.

Li Ling'er walked past Meng Hao, glaring daggers at him. She looked extremely disgruntled, as if her life was so unfair that she were on the verge of completely losing her temper. Meng Hao stared in shock; something definitely seemed off. Instead of leaving, he stopped and looked back. The first thing he noticed was Fang Shoudao rising to his feet, and then... he heard the middle-aged man from the Li Clan laugh and begin to speak.

"Elder Brother Shoudao, after I got your jade slip, I immediately called a clan meeting to discuss the matter. Hao'er is a wonderful kid, and I've really taken a liking to him. In fact, the entire Li Clan agrees! We all support Hao'er, and once he becomes the Clan Chief of the Fang Clan in the future, our two clans will have a powerful alliance!

"I have come here today prepared to give a Dao Realm treasure, 100 precious Ancient Realm treasures, 1,000 Immortal treasures, 100,000,000 Immortal jades, 10,000,000,000 spirit stones, as well as numerous other items, as the wedding gift for Hao'er and Ling'er!" Laughing heartily, the man from the Li Clan clasped hands and bowed toward Fang Shoudao.

The way he listed out all the gifts he was enough to cause even the Dao Realm experts to stare in shock. Such extravagant gift-giving was something rarely seen. However, as soon as they heard the word "wedding," everyone reached an epiphany.

Meng Hao was no longer an ordinary clan member. He was the number one Chosen of the Fang Clan, a famous blazing sun in the Ninth Mountain and Sea, and even a Crown Prince. With a status like that, any organization would offer up lavish gifts to form an alliance.

A broad smile could be seen on Fang Shoudao's face as he walked forward, laughing.

“Elder Brother Li, you’re far too polite!” he said. “Hao’er and this lass Ling’er have been engaged since childhood! I just decided to speed up the matter a bit, that’s all.” Fang Shoudao looked over kindly at Li Ling’er.

Meng Hao stood just outside the door to the main temple, gaping in shock. His jaw hung open and his eyes were wide. He almost couldn’t believe what was happening, and he felt his mind spinning.

“He sold me off?” he murmured. He suddenly began to tremble, and rage began to burn inside of him. Generally speaking, it would be the woman who received betrothal gifts. But considering that this was the Fang Clan, they were the ones to receive the gifts. What Meng Hao was even more incapable of accepting was that... everything that Fang Shoudao had said moments ago... had clearly been a huge con that he had fallen right into.

In the end, he could accept all of that, for the clan. He could part with all the extravagant gifts, despite the pain it caused him.

However, what was happening now had nothing to do with money!

Meng Hao’s mind suddenly filled with the image of a Red Wedding, of endless slaughter. That wedding had been one of the most painful moments of his life!

He saw himself holding Xu Qing in his arms until she gradually closed her eyes and faded away. Unforgettable stabs of pain once again filled his heart.

Just barely, he felt as if he could see into the cycle of reincarnation, and all of a sudden, he heard a voice which echoed eternally in his ears.

“I’m in the cycle of reincarnation... waiting for you.”

Although Meng Hao often seemed to treat other women flirtatiously, in truth, there was a place deep in his heart where only one woman could enter.

Chu Yuyan could not enter that place, so therefore... how could Li Ling’er possibly do so!?

That was... a place for only one person. It was... a place that belonged only to Xu Qing!

Meng Hao took a deep breath. His eyes shone with coldness, and even as everyone chatted and laughed, he suddenly spoke out, his voice icy, "Patriarch. I am already married!"

As soon as his voice rang out, the entire hall went completely silent. The middle-aged man from the Li Clan turned to glance at Meng Hao, then looked back at Fang Shoudao.

Li Ling'er's eyes brightened with anticipation.

Fang Shoudao coughed dryly and transmitted his voice to Meng Hao: "I'll give you twenty percent of the Li Clan's betrothal gift!"

Meng Hao's face was extremely calm, and his eyes were icy as he stared back wordlessly at Fang Shoudao.

"You little hoodlum. Fine. Fifty percent, no more. You know that the clan is in a difficult place right now, and I—"

"Patriarch," Meng Hao interrupted, his voice calm. "I, Meng Hao, love money. However, not everything in the world can be negotiated in terms of money and profit. I said. I'M ALREADY MARRIED!"

"I have a wife, and her name is Xu Qing." He spoke the words earnestly and very clearly.

All eyes in the main hall shifted to look at Meng Hao. With the exception of the Dao Realm Patriarchs, the other members of the Senior generation, as well as all the Chosen Meng Hao had fought with, had strange looks in their eyes. They stared at Meng Hao, their gazes shining.

Li Ling'er was very pretty, and would be the type of beloved partner that any clan would view as favorable. Furthermore, the backing of the Li Clan would enable Meng Hao to achieve future accomplishments with much greater ease, and he could definitely reach greater heights of glory.

Nobody could understand why Meng Hao would flat-out reject such an opportunity.

Li Ling'er had originally looked forward to seeing Meng Hao reject the offer. But for some reason, when she heard his explanation and saw how serious he was, she suddenly realized that he seemed very different from the scoundrel she remembered. In fact, he seemed to be hiding some great pain deep within him, a fact that caused her to tremble slightly.

"Where is she?" asked Fang Shoudao, sounding very stern. "On Planet South Heaven?" He looked at Meng Hao a bit more seriously than he had before, and his tone was very grave.

"She's not on Planet South Heaven," Meng Hao replied softly. "She's in the cycle of reincarnation, waiting for me to go find her." He could no longer prevent the grief from showing on his face. All of a sudden, he saw the vague image of a simple young woman standing in front of him, wearing a plain robe. She was the one who had taken him into the world of cultivation.

She wasn't shockingly beautiful, but somehow, she had worked her way into his heart. He had given her a Cosmetic Cultivation Pill, and in the end, they had experienced a Red Wedding together.

She was Xu Qing.

His Qing'er...

She had sacrificed her longevity for him. She had entered reincarnation for him. As she died, she had forced a smile onto her face... for him.

In Meng Hao's arms, she had turned from being beautiful and young into a white-haired old woman. She had withered up and closed her eyes. She had attempted to lift her hand up, as if to wipe the tears off of his face, but then that hand had slumped down lifelessly. That was... the image he saw.

"Her name is Xu Qing," he continued softly. "She's waiting for me in reincarnation, and we made a promise that I would go find her. She... is my wife. My... one and ONLY wife!" With that, he bowed to Fang Shoudao, then turned and flew off, his expression one of pain, grief, and bleakness.

Back in the main hall, everyone was shaken. They could sense the grief in Meng Hao, and could tell that although he usually seemed happy and frivolous on the outside, he was actually filled with a sea of sorrow and longing.

Li Ling'er shivered as she watched Meng Hao leave. As of this moment, the detestation she felt toward him was not so profound, and in fact, deep in her heart, pity took root.

Chapter 1010: A Wager!

After several days of banqueting, the Three Great Daoist Societies left, as did all of the other various sects and clans. The matter of the wedding contract with the Li Clan wasn't resolved. Fang Shoudao wouldn't waver in the matter, however, and continued to press for time.

Over the course of a few days, Fang Shoudao summoned Meng Hao on multiple occasions, but Meng Hao was in a different position than he had been. He wasn't just any young lord of the clan, he was now a blazing sun.

Therefore, he completely ignored Fang Shoudao, putting the matter off by focusing on cultivating the Nirvana Fruits.

Three days later, as he sat in secluded meditation in his residence, Fang Shoudao came for a personal visit. As soon as he entered the courtyard, he sent his aura out, and Meng Hao immediately opened his eyes.

It was in that moment that Fang Shoudao appeared in front of him. His face was grave as he looked Meng Hao over. Then he let out a long sigh and sat down cross-legged.

Meng Hao sat in place quietly, not saying a word.

"She's really that important to you?" Fang Shoudao asked slowly, looking at Meng Hao. Meng Hao was actually extremely important to Fang Shoudao, so important that Meng Hao didn't even realize the extent of it.

To Fang Shoudao, the most crucial matter at hand was ensuring that the Fang Clan was able to survive over the next thousand years.

After that, he wanted to help Meng Hao grow and mature. That was one reason why he didn't refuse the Three Great Daoist Societies' proposal. He believed that in the Three Great Daoist Societies, Meng Hao would definitely acquire better cultivation magic than he could in the Fang Clan.

As for the clan's financial predicament, that was something in which he had not deceived Meng Hao.

"She's my wife," Meng Hao replied, his voice soft, his head bowed.

After a moment of silence, Fang Shoudao spoke. Although he didn't sound somber like he had when negotiating prices with Meng Hao, his tone of voice and his expression seemed far more serious and intense than they had at that time.

"Can't you just let her go? You're the Crown Prince of the Fang Clan. Just forget about her.

"If you can't let go of her forever," he said quietly, "then how about for just a thousand years? If you don't like the Li Clan lass, then you don't have to pay attention to her at all. All the clan wants is an alliance. It's the same with the Li Clan. They just want an alliance.

"The marriage is just a formality."

Meng Hao looked up at Fang Shoudao for a moment, then slapped his bag of holding to produce the Ancient Realm precious treasure that was his Crown Prince command medallion. He rubbed it for a moment before carefully placing it down in front of Fang Shoudao.

Fang Shoudao's eyes widened, and waves of rage began to surge out inside of him. He looked at Meng Hao, his expression one of pain.

"In your heart, is that girl really more important than the entire clan?" The disappointment on Fang Shoudao's face was clear. This was true disappointment, not an act like before.

"Patriarch....

"I don't remember much about my early life on Planet East Victory," he murmured. "What I do remember from my childhood is that my dad and mom left. I have a memory of searching for them in the fog, crying because I couldn't find them.

"After I grew up, I took the Imperial examinations over and over again. Back then, my dream was to be rich when I grew up.

“Eventually I ran into her, and I joined a sect. That was how I came to be part of the cultivation world.

“She’s actually my Senior Sister from that sect.” After that, Meng Hao told Fang Shoudao everything about Xu Qing. He recounted all the stories and all the details that he could remember.

“Patriarch, there was one time in which I died. She ruined her own longevity, just to save me....

“When we got married, it was a Red Wedding, soaked in blood....

“I promised her that I would find her in reincarnation.” As his voice echoed out, filled with the sensation of memories, Fang Shoudao’s face gradually softened. He looked at Meng Hao for a long moment, then sighed.

“It’s just a formality,” he said, closing his eyes. “Why do you have to be like this?!”

“To the clan, it might just be a formality,” Meng Hao replied calmly. “But to me, it would be a betrayal. Patriarch, please appoint someone else as the Crown Prince. The Li Clan doesn’t want a beloved partner for Li Ling’er. All they want is an alliance. It doesn’t matter who it is. Anyone could be a match for her. Why does it have to be me? So please, just appoint someone else. It would be the perfect solution for the clan.”

Fang Shoudao maintained his silence. After a long moment, he rose to his feet and swished his sleeve. He did not take the Crown Prince command medallion, but instead sent it floating back into Meng Hao’s palm.

“In three months, the Three Great Daoist Societies will come for you. I’ve already prepared 1,500,000,000 spirit stones for you to take with you to use in your cultivation. I wasn’t going to tell you about this originally, but considering you can’t accept the marriage, well... do you dare to make a little wager with me?

“If you win, then I’ll take responsibility to cancel the marriage contract!

“But if you lose, then you can’t reject the arrangements made by the clan, and you’ll go through with the formalities!”

Meng Hao stood there silently.

“Hao’er,” Fang Shoudao continued with a sigh, “if your grandfather was still here in the clan, he would definitely persuade you for me....” Fang Shoudao thought of Meng Hao’s grandfather, who was actually the person that he had most favored among the junior generations. In fact, in his view, Meng Hao’s grandfather would have eventually become the clan’s third Dao Realm expert!

A tremor ran through Meng Hao as he recalled the vague image of his grandfather, an image he would never be able to forget.

Meng Hao’s parents had left to guard Planet South Heaven for 100,000 years. As for his grandfather, he had gone to search for an Outsider to ask for help. The Outsider came, but his grandfather had gone missing, and had never made contact with the clan again.

Feeling quite bitter, Meng Hao looked up at Fang Shoudao.

“What’s the bet!?”

“Before the Three Great Daoist Societies arrive, do everything you can to earn 1,500,000,000 spirit stones. Immortal jade doesn’t count. If you can do that, from then on the clan won’t require that you do anything you don’t want to.

“You must not resort to trickery, theft, or borrowing. I won’t interfere either.”

Meng Hao stared in shock for a moment. Then, he lowered his head and made some calculations. When he looked back up, his expression was calm again. Gazing at Fang Shoudao with a slightly pained expression, he nodded.

Fang Shoudao said nothing further. He stood up, turned, and vanished.

After he left, Meng Hao began to breathe heavily. A thousand ideas were running through his head. He knew that he was a member of the clan, and that it was impossible to sever that blood connection. His parents, his grandfather, and his other relatives would not agree to him severing ties with the Fang Clan.

Furthermore... the clan had not given Meng Hao any reason to do anything that would violate the rules.

If there was a wager, he would win it!

“Three months.... 1,500,000,000 spirit stones.” Although he wasn’t aware of it, a bashful expression had appeared on his face at some point. As far as he was concerned, winning that bet... wouldn’t be difficult at all.

He put away the Crown Prince command medallion and stood up. Then he turned into a beam of prismatic light that shot away to find Fang Xi.

Two days later, word began to spread throughout the Fang Clan. It didn’t take long before all the clan members were talking about the same thing.

“Did you hear? The Crown Prince is going to challenge the Medicine Pavilion!! Last time, he got through six levels with perfect marks! The Dao bell even rang!”

“Last time he challenged the Medicine Pavilion, he got to the seventh level, where he grafted 75,000 types of medicinal plants!”

“Everyone is saying that this time, the Crown Prince is definitely going to charge all the way to the tenth level!!”

The news quickly spread, until everyone in the clan had heard about it. All of them were inwardly shaken. Lately, Meng Hao was the like the sun at high noon within the clan, and was the focus of all attention.

Everything he said or did was noticed. Besides, the glory he had already achieved in the Dao of Alchemy Division was well known. Now that he was going to be heading back there, everyone in the clan was filled with anticipation.

That anticipation reached a peak on one particular morning at dawn, when Meng Hao flew out of his residence and headed toward the Dao of Alchemy Division, his Immortal Realm Paragon cultivation base surging with power.

He was followed by numerous members of the Fang Clan, who all wanted to witness the spectacle.

More and more people started to tag along. By the time he reached the Dao of Alchemy Division, huge amounts of Fang Clan cultivators were there, filling the sky as he headed toward the Medicine Pavilion.

The alchemists and apprentice alchemists of the Dao of Alchemy Division were all very excited as they joined in the procession.

The entire Dao of Alchemy Division was abuzz. Countless beams of colorful light shot through the air as Meng Hao landed outside of the Medicine Pavilion. He looked at the huge stone stele next to the entrance, and his eyes glittered. The same two old men who stood guard outside opened their eyes. When they saw Meng Hao, they slowly rose to their feet, clasped hands, and bowed.

“Greetings, Crown Prince,” they said in unison.

Meng Hao nodded, and without further word, stepped into the Medicine Pavilion.

As he did, the entire area was packed with clan members, all of whom were waiting to watch. Fang Xi was in the crowd. He quickly sent word out via jade slip, and a moment later, roughly 10,000 clan members rose up in various positions and began to cry out.

“The Crown Prince is challenging the Medicine Pavilion! This is a grand event in the Fang Clan, and it is an honor for anyone to be able to bear witness. I personally wish to offer 100 spirit stones as a congratulatory gift! If anyone else is willing to offer a similar gift, please place it into this bag of holding!”

“That’s right! I don’t have a lot of spirit stones, but I’m willing to give fifty as a gift of congratulations to the Crown Prince!”

“Of course this is how things should work! The Crown Prince is challenging the Medicine Pavilion. As fellow clan members, it’s only natural that we should offer gifts of congratulations! Here’s 100 spirit stones!”

As the calls rang out, more people produced spirit stones to place in the bags of holding. Others hesitated, but then increasing numbers began to do the same thing.

Very soon, a terrifying amount of spirit stones had built up within the bags of holding.

When Fang Shoudao saw what was happening, he stared in shock for a moment and then smacked his forehead. His expression immediately changed.

“Dammit! How could I have forgotten.... I remember hearing about how Meng Hao charged people in the Dao of Alchemy Division to hear his lectures about plants and vegetation!” Then Fang Shoudao thought about the rewards posted for the three Holy medicinal pills, and a feeling of alarm built up in his heart.

Those three medicinal pills included first, the Skypalace Sunspirit Pill, which Meng Hao had already concocted. The second was the Sea Cleaving Heaven Defying Pill, the reward for which was 1,000,000,000 spirit stones....

The third was the Heavenly Thought Pill. The incredible reward for concocting that pill was to become the Lord of the Dao of Alchemy Division. All of a sudden, Fang Shoudao gasped. After a long moment, he managed to recover his senses, and realized that this time, he had been conned by Meng Hao.

“You little hoodlum!” he thought, laughing bitterly. However, his eyes quickly glittered.

“However, he didn’t choose to go concoct the pills,” he murmured, “but instead, to challenge the Medicine Pavilion. That indicates that he’s not completely confident in his concocting abilities.... In that case, I haven’t necessarily lost the bet....” However, he still was a bit worried, so he suddenly vanished. When he reappeared, he was in the Medicine Immortal Sect, where he went to consult with Fang Yanxu.

Not too long after, he left the Medicine Immortal Sect, and his face was very calm. Based on what Fang Yanxu told him, he was now confident in what would happen.

“Not even Fang Yanxu can concoct the Heavenly Thought Pill. As for the Sea Cleaving Heaven Defying Pill, it’s equally difficult. The little hoodlum definitely can’t concoct them relying on his own skill alone. I told him that I wouldn’t interfere, but that doesn’t mean I can’t use other methods.”

Fang Shoudao appeared to be very pleased, and looked more like a crafty old fox than ever.

